Pal 5 B d

A NEW HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE

DESCENT of the ROMANS,

TO THE

DEMISE of his late Majesty, GEORGE II.

INSCRIBED

To his present Majesty, GEORGE III.

By WILLIAM RIDER, A. B.
Late of *Jesus College, Oxford.*

HISTORY *is philosophy teaching by examples.*
Bolingbroke *from* Dion. Hali.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

Printed for S. CROWDER and Co. in *Pater-noster Row*.
and J. WILKIE, in St. *Paul's Church-yard*.

2

MVSEVM
BRITANN
NICVM

THE

History of ENGLAND.

The History of EDWY *continued.*

DUNSTAN, at his return home, was ordained a bishop without a particular see, in the council of Bradford, in order to give him a seat in that assembly, which was entirely regulated by his advice. The rebellion he engaged in was glossed over with the name of religion, and the setting up Edgar vindicated by the sanction of a miracle, in which it was pretended, that a voice was heard from heaven, commanding the nobles to put

the crown upon his head ‖ The biſhop of Worceſter dying, Edgar named Dunſtan for that biſhopric; and the ſee of London falling vacant, he held them both for two years. Theſe preferments of Dunſtan added great weight to his party, which increaſed in the ſame proportion, as that of Edwy leſſened. † The archbiſhop, to wound him in a part ſtill more tender than the loſs of his crown, pronounced a formal divorce between him and his wife Ælgiva; and the king's affairs were in ſo bad a ſituation, that he was compelled to ſubmit to the ſentence. Edgar had made himſelf maſter of the kingdom, and the king was obliged to retire for ſhelter to the city of Glouceſter. About this time Ælgiva returned from Ireland, with a face as beauteous as ever; the ſcars made by ſearing being entirely healed. The archbiſhop, informed of her return, ordered his followers to ſeize her on her way to the king, and hamſtring her; and is ſaid to have put her to death at Glouceſter.

* Edgar being crowned by this time, a treaty was ſet on foot, by which Edwy was obliged to conſent to a partition, that deprived him of the greateſt part of his dominions. Robbed of the converſation of a wife, with whoſe charms he was enamoured, ſtripped of his

‖ A. D. 957.

† A. D. 958. Anglia Sacr. Tom. ii. p. 106.

* Manuſcript life of Dunſtan in the Cottonian library, mark'd Cleop. D. 7.

his kingdom by an unnatural uſurpation, and deſerted by his ſubjects, he gave himſelf up to the firſt tranſports of his grief which ſettled into an inveterate melancholy, that carried him off.

The character of this king has been treated with ſo much virulence by the monks, who were his enemies, that an attempt to free it from their miſrepreſentations, is a debt we owe to truth, and a claim which may be made by poſterity. As this prince was young and handſome, it would be no wonder if he had been amorous likewiſe; but though accuſed by the monks of being a great rake and debauchee, in general terms, is not charged with a ſingle amour to vindicate their calumny. 'Tis true indeed, that he is accuſed of keeping a concubine, and living with an adultreſs, but the perſon who is branded with theſe odious appellations, is acknowledged to have been his wife, by the very authours, who endeavour to aſperſe and calumniate him. So far was he from being guilty of any thing unchaſte, that his moſt inveterate enemies cannot inſtance a ſingle intrigue that he was engaged in; and his rigorous fidelity to the nuptial tie, ſeems to have been the only cauſe of their rancour, and of his ruin. If his conjugal fidelity was great, that of his royal conſort, though named an adultreſs, was not leſs conſpicuous: 'twas her love to her huſband that induced her to quit her exile, and to ruſh into

the very arms of death, rather than be reſtrained from ſeeing him. If the character of this royal pair be irreproachable in this point, the king's is no leſs ſo in another, though equally blackened by the monks; he is charged with having exerciſed great ſeverities againſt them, and to have turned every one of their order out of their monaſteries. But it ſhould be remembered, that there were no monks at that time in England, except a few collected by Turketul and Ethewolf in Croyland and Abingdon, beſides thoſe placed by Dunſtan in Canterbury, and enriched by him with the ſpoil of the ſecular canons, who were turned out to make room for them. Even with reſpect to the laſt mentioned place, though the removal of them would have been an act of juſtice, in order to reſtore the monaſtery to its original owners; yet we have not the name of a ſingle perſon mentioned, who was turned out of it; and the ſame may be averred with reſpect to the other convents. While we thus exculpate the king from crimes falſly laid to his charge, we are very far from aſſerting he had no faults. Frailties are the very characteriſtic of humanity, and he that is faultleſs, muſt be more than a man. His youth however, is an apology for all his weakneſſes. In baniſhing Dunſtan, he did no more than what his honour required of him; but he ſhould not have ſtopped there. He ſhould have rid his kingdom of a more dangerous enemy, to whom Dunſtan was nothing but an inſtru-

inſtrument; but he was afraid of looſing his crown by ſuch a bold attempt, and his fear of looſing it, was what rendered its loſs irremediable. Had he been as reſolute in ſecuring himſelf, as in vindicating his honour, the crown might have glittered on his brows, till age had called him into another world: but for want of this precaution, he ſubjected his conſort, whom he loved more than his life, to the rage of his enemies, and involved himſelf in miſeries which none but a young king torn from a lovely ſpouſe, and ſtrippped of his kingdoms, can poſſibly conceive. In a word, if he had been leſs reſolute, he might poſſibly have ſoothed his enemies; if he had been more reſolute, he might have put it out of their power to hurt him.

EDGAR. A. D. 959.

EDWY dying without children, though not without ſome ſuſpicion of being murdered, as Huntingdon calls his death an untimely one, his whole kingdom was re-united under Edgar. The great abilities this prince had ſhown in making himſelf maſter of a part of his brother's dominions during his life, ſhone equally bright in his government of the whole kingdom after his death.

Knowing too well the turbulent diſpoſition of the Northumbrians, he divided their govern-

vernment into two diminions, and conſtantly kept a ſtrong body of forces in thoſe parts, which at once prevented any ill conſequence that might ariſe from the ambition of a governour, and convinced thoſe northern nations that they could not take up arms with any probability of ſucceſs.

Having thus provided for the ſecurity of the north, he guarded his coaſts with a formidable fleet, far ſuperiour to any that had been fitted out by his predeceſſors, and more powerful than thoſe of all the European princes joined together.

The number of veſſels which compoſed his navy are variouſly related by different authors. Some ſay, it amounted to no leſs than four thouſand ſail; others again, with more credibility, ſettle it at three thouſand ſix hundred.

He divided them into three fleets, conſiſting of * twelve hundred ſail each; one of which was conſtantly ſtationed on the eaſtern, another on the weſtern, and the third on the northern

* Malmeſbury ſays that he had four fleets, conſiſting each of twelve hundred ſail, and conſequently makes his navy amount to no leſs than four thouſand eight hundred veſſels. Yet, if we take the leaſt number mentioned, we have a plain proof that the Anglo-Saxons muſt have carried on a conſiderable commerce, to be able to find ſailors ſufficient to man ſuch a navy: and that they applied their thoughts to the increaſing their marine, even in thoſe reigns, in which we have no mention of their maritime affairs.

thern coaſts of this kingdom. Not ſatisfied with this armament, unleſs he was an eye witneſs that it anſwered its intention, he went on board the eaſtern fleet every year, after Eaſter, and, ſailing weſt, ſcoured all the channel, from the mouth of the Thames to the land's end in Cornwal. There quitting theſe ſhips, he went on board the weſtern fleet, in which, ſteering his courſe to the north, he looked into every creek and bay not only on the Engliſh and Scotch coaſts, but likewiſe on thoſe of Ireland and the Hebrides, which lie between them and Britain. Then, meeting the northern fleet, he ſailed in it to the mouth of the Thames. Thus ſurrounding the iſland every ſummer, he rendered any invaſion impracticable, kept his ſailors in continual exerciſe, and effectually aſſerted his ſovereignty over the ſeas. To defray the expences of ſuch an armament, he laid a tax on his ſubjects, and applied the ſums paid him by ſuch kings as were his tributaries.

In order to guard againſt danger from the Scots, and prevent them from encouraging any inſurrection, he quitted Edinburgh, to their king Indulf in the beginning of * his reign. To attach them ſtill more ſtrongly in his intereſt, and to ſettle the tranquillity of thoſe parts, beyond any poſſibility of an interruption, he ceded the whole country of Lothian, from the Tweed to the Forth, to Kenneth,

* A. D. 960.

nith, who had himself made the proposal, and on his compliance did him homage. As a consequence of this treaty, Maccuse king of Man and the isles, and some toparchs of Galloway readily submitted.

Ludwall, the king of Aberfraw in North-Wales, refusing to pay his annual tribute, was soon reduced by Edgar's forces. On his submission, his tribute was changed, from an annual sum of money, to five hundred wolves heads to be brought every year. And though Wales, at that time, was pestered with these animals, yet this expedient had so good an effect, that in three years space there was not one to be found all over the country.

His brother Edwy had been calumniated and excommunicated only on account of a supposed intrigue with a lady, who was, in fact, his wife: but he had opposed the exorbitant power of the Monks. Edgar, who was their patron, on the contrary, was esteemed a saint, though his very flatterers have recorded his amours, which were many, and some of them attended with acts of violence, and murder. But his munificence covered all his infirmities, and his profusion seems to have obtained him a licence for doing what he pleased, without suffering in his character, or forfeiting the esteem of his sycophants.

The first instance we have of the irregularity of his passions, is his committing a rape on Wolfhed, or Wilfrida, a nun, by whom

he

he had a daughter named * Editha, who was equally famous, for her beauty, chaſtity, and the ſpritelineſs of her parts.

† This appears not to have been the only intrigue in which the king was engaged even within the courſe of this year. For it ſeems, not without grounds, that the intimacy between him and the daughter of Ordmar, earl of Devonſhire, was ſuſpected to have been rather an illicit, than a conjugal one. Oſbern, the writer of ſaint Dunſtan's life, Trivet and Joan. Paris expreſsly call her his concubine; and Malmeſbury, Matth. Paris, Matth. Weſtm. and Higden, though they compliment her with the name of *wife*, never mention in what year ſhe was married. That the marriage was liable to ſuſpicions, is evident from Efrida's diſowning it, and endeavouring to ſet her own ſon on the crown, becauſe ſhe thought Edward illigitimate. Yet even if we ſhould grant Ethelfleda, who had the Saxon ſurname of Edneda, *i. e.* the fair, given her on account of her beauty, to have been Edgar's lawful wife; his character will be ſtill very dubious, if not very bad.

If

* She was a nun at the monaſtery of Wilton, of which ſhe was made abbeſs, when 15 years old. Being one day reproached by Ethelwold for dreſſing a little too gay for her profeſſion, ſhe ſmartly replied, "that God regarded the heart more than the dreſs, and that a virtuous mind might be concealed as well under a gold brocade, as under the mean dreſs in which he himſelf was cloathed."

† A. D. 961.

If we ſhould ſay that no beauty was ſafe within this kingdom, we ſhould not ſtain the memory of this king, with more guilt than he was conſcious of. Yet as general cenſure without proof, is ungenerous, if not unjuſt, we ſhall ſupport our accuſation with facts, which his admirers have furniſhed us with. Hearing, while he was at Andover, great encomiums of a young lady in that place, he ſent word immediately to the mother that he intended to take a lodging that night with her daughter. The old lady knowing too well the violence of his paſſions was unwilling to affront him, and therefore ſent him a favourable anſwer: but having a greater regard for the virtue of her child than to ſacrifice it to the luſt of the king, entered into a plot with her maid, to deceive him. The maid having thus ſupplied the place of her young lady, was diſcovered by Edgar the next morning, who is ſaid to have taken her away with him, and to have kept her till his marriage with Elfrida.

Theſe youthful irregularities, however palliated, give us no very favourable idea of Edgar's virtues, and the manner in which he gained poſſeſſion of Elfrida, is no leſs horrid than ſingular. This young lady was the daughter of Ordgar count of Devon, and though educated in a private manner, was ſo beautiful, that the fame of her charms reached the ears of Edgar. In order to ſatisfy himſelf whether her beauty anſwered the report

he

he had heard of it, he ſent Ethelwold his favourite, who under pretext of a viſit to her father got a ſight of the daughter. As he was then young and ſuſceptible of the impreſſions of a fair face, he was ſo captivated with Elfreda's charms, that he proved falſe to his truſt, and made his addreſſes to the lady. On his return to the king, he deſcribed her in ſuch a manner as convinced Edgar, that ſhe was neither a proper object for his curioſity or affections. Having thus diverted the king's thoughts from Elfrida, he took an opportunity to repreſent to him that ſhe would prove an advantageous match to himſelf, though by no means worthy of a monarch; and having obtained his conſent to demand her in marriage, ſucceeded in his ſuit. Ethelwold had not long enjoyed the fruits of his treachery, before the whole myſtery was revealed to the king. Edgar however diſſembled his reſentment, till he had ocular demonſtration of his perfidy. For this purpoſe he found ſome pretence for travelling near Ethelwold's houſe, and declared his intention of viſiting a lady, who was ſo much cried up for her beauty. The earl poſted away with the news to his wife, at the ſame time adviſing her to uſe all the methods ſhe could to conceal her graces from the eyes of an amorous monarch, who would ſatiate his deſires at the expence of her chaſtity. Elfrida being by theſe means acquainted with the wrong done to herſelf as

well as to the king, was filled with resentment, and instead of following her husband's advice, made use of every art to set her charms out to the greatest advantage, and to make herself appear the more amiable. This interview served only to convince the king that his favourite had abused his confidence. He dissembled his resentment; he sent Ethelwold a little while after to secure the coast of Northumberland against * the Danes, and in his way thither he was found murdered. No steps were taken to find out the authors of this crime; but Elfrida, as soon as decency would permit, was † married to the king, by whom she had two sons named Edmund and Ethelred.

During this interval Dunstan who had, by an act of injustice, been intruded into the see of Canterbury, received the pope's sanction for

* From a manuscript in the archbishop of Canterbury's library at Lambeth, marked *Brutus*. Malmesbury relates the murder in a manner that is not so much for the king's credit. According to him, the king invited Ethelwold to a hunting match in Harewood forest, where he took the opportunity to pierce him through with a dart. An illegitimate son of the earl, coming by at that instant, the king is said to have asked him how he liked the game, and to have received for answer, that if it pleased his majesty it ought not to displease him. Edgar was charmed so much at this unexpected reply, that he is reported to have treated the youth with singular marks of his favour; and it is said that Elfrida, to expiate the guilt of being accessary to her husband's death, built a nunnery on the spot where he was slain.

† A. D. 962.

for his election, and returned from Rome invested with the character of the pope's legate. By his interest he promoted Oswald his relation to the see of Winchester, and placed Ethelwold his intimate friend in that of Worcester. Under this triumvirate the king and the kingdom were at that time governed; their characters for religion were so great, that to oppose them was impiety. The pretended reformation of the monasteries was the first work they sat about as soon as they thought their power secure, and Edgar, who was their dupe, lent them his name to give a sanction to their measures. The infamous lives of the secular clergy at that time, added great weight to their party, and though they were mostly men of great families, were obliged to give way to the zeal of these pretended reformers. The secular cannons were thus turned out of all the cathedrals and convents, and the benedictine monks planted in their stead.

Not contented with this signal triumph over their opponents, they laid their plot to fleece the kingdom, and rob the king in some cases of his revenues, and in others of his prerogative. Being the chief miracle-mongers of those days, they never wanted some extraordinary revelation to gloss over their villainy; the sacred seal of heaven was made use of to gain credit to their impostures, dreams and visions were pretended, and charters forged to enrich their foundations, and to impoverish

the sovereign. Edgar's zeal for this puritanical fraternity subjected him to their artifices, and frequently wrested some of the crown lands out of his hands to enrich their endowments. The charter of Peterborough abbey, wherein it was exempted from episcopal as well as civil jurisdiction, was undoubtedly forged at this * time, though it passed current with Edgar, and induced him to grant them the same privileges, which this spurious instrument pretended to derive originally from Wulfhere ‡ king of Mercia.

It must be acknowledged that Dunstan and his colleagues had their virtues as well as their vices, and that their administration was as beneficial in some instances, as it was pernicious in others. Though the vices of the king have descended down to us varnished over with the adulations of monkery, yet they did not pass unnoticed or unreproved by Dunstan. That famous prelate did not fail to make him frequent remonstrances on the subject of his irregularities; and finding that his admonitions were ineffectual put him at last to a seven years penance. The king however repeating his irregularities notwithstanding this exertion of ecclesiastic authority, the archbishop refused to crown him till such time as he submitted to live according to his direction.

† The inhabitants of the isle of Thanet, having been guilty of seizing upon the goods of

* A. D. 963. ‡ A. D. 656. † A. D. 969.

of ſome merchants, from York, in open defiance of the laws of the kingdom, ſo exaſperated the king, that he ordered all their country to be laid waſte, with an unexampled cruelty. * The penance enjoined Edgar for his irregularities being probably now expired, he was crowned with great ſolemnity and ſplendour, at Bath, in a grand aſſembly of the clergy and nobility, called Wittena gemot.

† The ſame year an inſurrection happening in Wales, Jago who had depoſed and impriſoned his brother, was himſelf dethroned and driven out of his kingdom by Jevaf his

 nephew,

* A. D. 973. Tyrrel rejecting this opinion for delaying the king's coronation, becauſe the term preſcribed for penance was but ſeven years, and the king had now reigned twice that term, offers the following conjecture. "That he was crowned long before in the very beginning of his reign, though our monkiſh hiſtorians have either forgot to mention it, or omitted it on purpoſe to add the greater luſtre to archbiſhop Dunſtan." Our author than adds, "it is very certain, that neither in this king's time, nor long after the conqueſt, it was ever known that the king elect took the title of king, till after his coronation. And to confirm this conjecture, he proceeds to inform us that on ſome great occaſion our kings repeated the ceremony of their coronation, as appears from the examples of king Ethelred, Richard I. and Henry III." But if it ſhould appear that the king was enjoined penance more than once, or twice only, this ingenious remark muſt be rejected. If we believe Speed, he was enjoined penance for the rape committed on Wilfrida the nun.

† A. D. 973. Caradoc's chronicle, with Vaughan's notes.

nephew, who reſtored his father to the throne. The uſurper fled to Edgar for refuge, who marched with an army into Northwales to reſtore him, but was met at Bangor by Howel, who conſented to cede that part of the country to Jago, which he had enjoyed during the life of Jevaf, and a peace was made between the two parties.

* The next year Edgar being at Cheſter, ſummoned all the tributary kings to attend him at that place, who rowed his barge down the river Dee, in his way to the monaſtery of St. John the baptiſt, while he himſelf ſat at the helm. Smollet conſiders this circumſtance as no more than a compliment or frolic, acted in an excurſion of pleaſure: when it is evident from the king's behaviour, that it was a real act of homage; nor can his remark, "That his ſucceſſors might juſtly boaſt themſelves to be kings of England, when attended in that manner," be underſtood in any other light.

After having ſurvived this ceremony about one year, he died greatly in eſteem among the monks, who repreſented him as illuſtrious as Cyrus,

* A. D. 974. The great perſonages who did Edgar this honour, were Henneth III. Malcolm lord of Cumberland, Macho king of Man and the Iſles, together with Duffnal, Gryffyth, Howell, Jago, and Judethil, kings of Wales. This year was remarkable for the death of Swarling monk of Croyland in the 142d year of his age, and of another who died ſoon after him, aged 115.

Cyrus, Romulus, Alexander, and Charlemagne. While, on the other hand, he is compared by other hiſtorians to the vileſt of princes, and ranked in the ſame claſs with Brunichild and Irene. Canute, when informed of the great ſanctity of Editha, Edgar's daughter, could not forbear ſaying, that "He could not believe it poſſible for the daughter of ſuch a wicked father to be a ſaint."

To do juſtice to the character of this prince, we muſt pronounce it to be a mixture of virtues and vices, in which the latter ſeem to be rather predominant. If indeed we conſider that he was but ſixteen when he acceded to the throne, we cannot help being aſtoniſhed that he ſhould have diſplayed ſo many ſigns of ſagacity, conduct, and wiſdom, and cannot help wiſhing that the few vices he was guilty of, were either leſs, or elſe buried in oblivion. It muſt grieve us to own, that he aſcended the throne of Mercia, by a flagrant act of injuſtice, that he was lawleſs in his pleaſures, bloody in his revenge, ſuperſtitious in his religion, a tool of the monks, and by his blind ſubmiſſion to their ſuggeſtions, an enemy to the dignity of the crown, as well as an innocent cauſe of all the miſeries which ſucceeded his reign. By too great an encouragement ſhewn to foreigners, he introduced corruption among his people, who imitated the vices of all the nations on the continent: and by his indulging

ing the Danes in living promiſcuouſly among his ſubjects, gave them an opportunity of knowing the weakneſs of the kingdom. In all probability, he might be led into this errour from a love of peace, which he enjoyed, ſo much above any of his predeceſſors, that he is by ſome authours, ſtiled Edgar the pacific or peaceable.

It is time now to turn our eyes to the more favourable part of his character, and here we muſt confeſs, he appears to great advantage; the conſummate politician, the wiſe legiſlator, the patriot king, are the leaſt of his titles. We have already related the meaſures he took to defend his kingdom from invaſion, and to ſcour the channel from pirates; the method he took to prevent diſturbances in the north; and the expedient he made uſe of to extirpate wolves, which at that time infeſted the country. His laws for the preſervation of civil happineſs, are not leſs admirable. His eccleſiaſtic inſtitutions, beſides regulating the payments of tythes, contain a remarkable proviſion for the due obſervance of the ſabbath, which fixes the commencement of it at three in the afternoon, on Saturday, and the end at day-break on the Monday morning. He next provides for the impartial diſtribution of juſtice among all ranks and orders of his ſubjects, and enjoins that all penalties ſhould be inflicted with clemency and in imitation of the divine mercy. Defamation ſeems peculiarly to have drawn down

down his anger, and was ordered to be punished with the loss of the defamer's tongue, or at least with the price of his head. He published a general amnesty for all crimes committed within a settled time, on condition that the criminals produced a certain number of wolves tongues, according to the nature of the crimes for which they stood convicted. In order to render the observance of his laws effectual, he subjected every judge, who should pass an unjust sentence, to punishment; if his decision was wilfully corrupt, he was fined one hundred and twenty shillings, the price of a mans head; If he would take his oath that it was owing to ignorance, he was rendered incapable of holding any place under the king for the future. This rigour so much for the emolument of the public, and the preservation of private property, was farther enforced by his making a circuit, every winter, throughout the kingdom, in order to see that justice was duely administered, to prevent nobles from becoming oppressors, and to protect the meanest of his people from suffering wrong.

We have already hinted, that the concourse of foreigners in this island subjected the manners of the English to great corruptions: the Danes particularly taught them to drink. Edgar endeavoured to put a stop to this vice by the most gentle methods, and ordering pins to be fixed in the cups then used, forbade any of his subjects to drink below them. The

coin

coin of the kingdom, ſeemed now worthy of his regard, and the influence, which the fineneſs of the ſpecie, has on commerce, perſuaded him that it was neceſſary to remedy any abuſes, that might have crept into this branch of the national wealth. The variety of mints then in the kingdom, were aboliſhed to prevent abuſes, and one coin only was allowed to be current. To this we may add, another article, not leſs important to a trading nation, which is the reducing all weights and meaſures to one ſtandard: this he found neceſſary to ſupport the credit of the kingdom in foreign markets; and to prevent ſuch abuſes as might injure his ſubjects at home. In this point of view, we may juſtify the praiſes, which ancient hiſtorians beſtow on this prince, and vindicate the parallel they draw between him and the moſt famous heroes of antiquity. Nay we may go further, we may boldly ſay, that he ſurpaſſed them; in as much as they acquired their fame by acts of rapine, and the deſtruction of their ſpecies; whereas Edgar's fame was built upon a nobler foundation; that of reigning ſixteen years, without having a thief heard of in his dominons on land, or a pirate by ſea. *

EDWARD

* Though this prince was both ſhort and ſlender, yet he poſſeſſed an extraordinary degree of ſtrength and activity, and was famous for athletic exerciſes, in which he inſiſted upon his antagoniſts not ſparing him on account of his dignity. Kenneth king of Scots having taken

EDWARD, *ſurnamed the* MARTYR. A. D. 975.

THE death of Edgar was no ſooner known, than the peace of the kingdom was rendered precarious. Alfere, duke of Mercia, took this opportunity to deprive the monks of all the benefices they held in his country, and filled their places with ſecular prieſts. His example was followed by others in different parts of the kingdom, which might perhaps

taken great liberties in ridiculing the diminutiveneſs of his ſtature, it came to Edgar's ears; who without taking any notice of the affront, was determined to reſent it. For this purpoſe, he lead Kenneth one day into an unfrequented place, where he acquainted him with his knowledge of the liberties he had taken, and preſenting him with two ſwords, bid him take which he pleaſed, that he might be convinced, that fortitude did not conſiſt in ſtature, adding it was ſcandalous, for a perſon to brag at a feaſt, who was not as ready to ſhow his courage in a fray. Kenneth ſtruck with this proof of his valour, and aſhamed of his own freedom, begged pardon for his rudeneſs, and Edgar forgave him. The Scottiſh hiſtorians deny this circumſtance, alledging as appears from Anderſon's tables, that there was no king of the name of Kenneth, cotemporary with this monarch. Smollet, a Scotchman, does however admit it for truth, and remarks that it is ſo far from derogating from the courage of Kenneth, that it rather redounds to the honour of his memory, as it proves he had ſenſe and candour to make reparation for the offence he had given". Permit me to add to this remark, that it redounds no leſs to the honour of Edgar, as it proves, that he was as generous as he was courageous, in forgiving the Scottiſh king ſo eaſily.

perhaps have undergone a thorough reformation, had not Ethelwin, with other noblemen, opposed it with success. These factions had a very great influence on the election of a king; and rendered the succession of Edward at first dubious. Elfrida, the queen dowager, a woman of an ambitious spirit, endeavoured to set him aside, in order to raise her own son to the throne. As he was but seven years of age, she thought that during his minority, the reigns of government would be placed in her own hands, and the administration conducted as she thought proper. In order to pave the way, for so desirable an effect, she spread abroad a report, that Edward was illegitimate, which being generally credited, raised a powerful faction in her favour. Dunstan, foreseeing the ruin of the Benedictine order in the success of Elfrida, adhered strongly to Edward, who was entirely at his disposal; however, it was at last agreed upon by both parties, that the affair should be determined in a general assembly, to be summoned for that purpose. When the assembly met, the debates ran high, and the majority seemed to be in the interest of Ethelred, Elfrida's own son; when Dunstan, confiding in his popularity, rose up, took Edward by the hand, and lead him to the church, where he was anointed and crowned, amidst a vast concourse of people. Whatever inclination the opposite party had to annul this arbitrary act of the prelate, they were

were obliged to be quiet, his intereſt was great, and the character he bore of a prophet, and an apoſtle, rendered all reſiſtance fruitleſs: Edward was, for this reaſon, left in quiet poſſeſſion of the crown, and Elfrida retired with her ſon to Corf-Caſtle in Dorſetſhire, which was aſſigned for her dower.

Dunſtan having thus ſecured his own power and intereſt, exerted all his endeavours in behalf of the monks, and employed the king's authority in their favour. But as the declarations of a prince, at that time in his minority, and entirely at his devotion, might juſtly be ſuſpected, the prelate ſeconded his motions by pretended miracles and revelations. At a great council held at Wincheſter, a ſpeaking crucifix was heard to declare in his favour: the oppoſite party juſtly ſuſpecting the miracle, a ſecond meeting was agreed on at Calne in Wiltſhire, where, in the height of the debates, the floor fell in and cruſhed a great number of perſons to death; but the beam on which Dunſtan was ſeated continuing firm, and preſerving the prelate unhurt, this was eſteemed a ſecond miracle in his favour. Some however, who obſerve that the king was abſent from that meeting by the particular deſire of Dunſtan, give ſhrewd grounds to ſuſpect that this was no more than a trick of that prelate's contrivance; and his being the only perſon who eſcaped the danger, ſeems to confirm the truth of their ſuſpicion.

ſpicion. This dreadful ſcene involving ſo many of Dunſtan's enemies in the ruin, and at the ſame time intimidating ſuch of the party as ſurvived, they dropped all further thoughts of oppoſition, and left him to finiſh his plan without any interruption.

The king, though oppoſed at firſt by his ſtep-mother, loſt all thoughts of reſentment, and careſſed her with an affection, that rendered him an example and a wonder. As for Elfrida, ſhe ſeemed inſenſible to the little acts of filial duty which he paid her; and carried away by the impulſe of ambition, inſtead of repaying his fondneſs with embraces, ſeems to have employed herſelf in hatching ſchemes for his deſtruction.

The king returning one day from the chace in Dorſetſhire, left his attendants and rode up to Corf caſtle, in order to pay his compliments to Elfrida, and his brother, of whom he was very fond. His ſtep-mother received him very courteouſly, and deſired him to alight in order to take ſome refreſhment; but the king refuſing for fear of filling his attendants with ill apprehenſions by his ſtay, ſhe inſiſted upon his drinking a cup of wine as he ſat on horſeback; the young prince complied with her requeſt, and as he was drinking was ſtabbed in the back by one of Elfrida's domeſtics. Edward finding himſelf wounded, immediately ſet ſpurs to his horſe, in order to join his company and ſave himſelf from a ſecond

BRITISH
MUSEUM

EDWARD the MARTYR Stabb'd by Order of his Mother in Law

Engrav'd for Rider's History of England.

cond blow; but fainting with loſs of blood fell out of the ſaddle, and his foot being entangled in the ſtirrup, was dragged in that poſture a conſiderable way, till his horſe ſtopped at the houſe of a blind woman of its own accord. The ſervants of Elfrida having traced him by the blood to this place, found him quite dead, and terribly diſfigured by the ſtones over which he had been dragged. To conceal his murder they threw his body into a well, where it was found a few days after, and buried at Wareham: but being afterwards taken up again by Alfere, was interred at Shaftesbury. Elfrida, to prevent the ſtorm which might have overwhelmed her on account of this act of cruelty, pretended to be ſtruck with great remorſe for her guilt, and to atone for her crime, erected two monaſteries, one at Ambresbury, and the other at Werwell; in one of which ſhe ſpent the reſidue of her days in acts of mortification and penance, wearing hair-cloth, ſleeping on the bare ground, and practiſing other auſterities, which were looked upon in thoſe days as ſigns of penitence, and expiations for crimes of the moſt horrible nature.

ETHELRED II. A. D. 978.

EDWARD being thus baſely murdered, Dunſtan offered his ſervices to Editha his ſiſter, imagining that if ſhe was raiſed to the

throne, his interest and authority would be secure. But the young lady being, by this time, an abbess in the convent of Wilton, conscious of the objection that might be made to the baseness of her birth, and terrified at the catastrophe of her brother Edward, refused to accept of his offer. The prelate, now having no other resource but to make a virtue of necessity, consented, though with some reluctance, to the * coronation of Ethelred, and anointed

* As the antiquity of the coronation oath is a subject that has employed the pens of several learned men, and seems not to have been rightly understood by our historians, who have made it more modern than it really is, it will not be amiss to gratify the curiosity of those who honour this history with their perusal, by presenting them with a transcript of the original oath administered by Dunstan to Ethelred, which is more antient, as well as more authentic than any which other historians have produced. The original Saxon runs thus: "*On thære halgan thrynesse naman, ic threo thing behate christenum folce, and me under theodum. An ærest that Godes cyrice, and eall Christes folce, minra gewealda sothe sibbe healde, Other is that ic reaflac and healle unribte thing eallum hadum forbeode: Thridde, that ic behate and beheode on eallum domum riht. And mildheortnesse. that us eallum arfæst and mildheort God thurh that his ecean miltse forgyfe se lyfath, and rixath.*" The verbal translation of which runs thus: "In the name of the ever blessed trinity. I promise three things to the christian people and my subjects. First, that the church of God and christian people within my dominions shall enjoy uninterrupted peace [*i. e.* be free from any molestation.] Secondly, that I will prevent theft, and every kind of injustice in all ranks of men. Thirdly, I engage

anointed him at Kingſton, in the twelfth year of his age.

C 3 Yet

gage to preſerve and maintain juſtice and clemency in all judicial proceedings, that the kind, merciful GOD may, according to his eternal mercy, forgive us all our ſins; who liveth and reigneth, &c." The charge which the archbiſhop added to this oath, containing in it ſuch ſentiments as may be of uſe on all future occaſions of the like nature, I ſhall give it in the original, with an Engliſh tranſlation, that the reader, who underſtands Saxon, may be gratified with a real curioſity, and he who does not underſtand that obſolete language, may partake with him in his pleaſure. "*Se criſtena cyng the thas thing gebealdeth, he geearnath hym ſylfum woroldlicne weorthmynt, and him ece God ægther gemiltrath; geon and werdum life ge eac on tham ecean the æfre ne ateorath. Gif he thonne that awægth that gode wæs behaten. thonne ſceal hit ſyththan wyrſian ſwythe ſona on this theode, and calle hit on ende gebwyrfath on that wyrſt. butan hron his lif fæce ær hit gebete. Eala leof blaford beorh huru thirga georne the ſylfum. gethenc that gelome. that thu ſcealt tha beorde forth æt Godes dome ypan and lædan. the thu eart to hyrde geſcyft on thyſum life. and thonne gecennan hu thu gebeolde that Criſt ær gebohte ſylf mid his blode* ——

"*Gehalgodes cinges riht is that he nænigne man ne wordeme. and that he wuduwan and ſteop-cild and æltheodige werige, and amundige, and ſtala forbeode. and unriht hæmedu gebete and ſibligeru to-træme, and grundlinga forbeode. wiccan, and galdra adeliga. mægmyrthran and manſwaran of earde adrife. thærfan midæl myſſan fede. andeald and wiſe and ſyfre him to getheaterum hæbbe. and rihtwiſe men him to wicnerum rette. forthan ſwa hwæt ſwa hig to unriht gedoth thurh his aful. he his ſceal calles geſcead agyldan on domes dæg.*" *i. e.* The chriſtian king who obſerves theſe things, ſhall acquire temporal honour, and render the deity propitious to him both in the preſent life, and in that eternal one, which knows no end. But if he ſhall at any time

Yet, in the very ceremony, the prelate could not forbear dropping some expressions, which discovered his malevolence, as appears in the note; and, in the sermon he made on this occasion, he boldly told him, that his reign would be attended with great calamity on account of his mother's guilt. This treatment was not less severe than it was unjust, as it is generally acknowledged that the youth sincerely lamented the death of his brother, to which he was no ways accessary, and drew upon him the indignation of his mother, who from a consciousness

time break the promise he has made to GOD, the state of his kingdom shall immediately grow worse, and at last be involved in ruin; unless, in the future part of his life, he shall repent and amend his faults. My dearest lord, have an especial care of yourself. Frequently recollect, that you must lead and produce the flock at the judgment-seat of GOD, over which you have been created the shepherd in this life, and then you will be made to understand that you have the charge of that flock, which *Christ* has purchased with his own blood.

It is the duty of an anointed king to judge no man unjustly; to protect the orphan and stranger, to restrain theft, to punish adultery, to dissolve and set aside incestuous marriages, to abolish sorcery, to extirpate those that are guilty of parricide and perjury, to feed the poor with alms, to advise with persons famous for their age, wisdom and sobriety; and to place men of probity in the administration, inasmuch as the king is responsible for all the crimes they are guilty of, through his fault, at the day of judgment." From an ancient Saxon manuscript in the Cottonian library; see, likewise, the manuscript code of constitutions in the Bodleian library, Oxford, cap. 11. entitld "*Be eorthlicum cyninge.*"

ſciouſneſs of guilt, looked on the exceſs of his ſorrow, as a bitter reproach of her crimes.

The ſtate of the kingdom, and the weakneſs of the young monarch was ſuch; that Dunſtan might probably have foreſeen the calamities to which the nation was expoſed, without pretending to the gift of prophecy. Ethelred was young, inexperienced and untaught: his education had been neglected by his mother, and, on his acceſſion to the throne, he was ſurrounded by a crowd of flatterers, who endeavoured both to make an advantage of his ignorance, and, if poſſible, to render it inſuperable. The nation was likewiſe at that time rent with two factions, which alternately endeavoured to get the aſcendant in the young king's graces, and mutually blackened each other. Not able to diſtinguiſh between them, he knew not which to truſt, and fluctuated in all his meaſures, like a ſhip without ballaſt; his conduct ſhowed, in the whole tenour of it, nothing but timidity, perplexity, indolence, and diſtruſt. Had he been a perſon of a maturer age, and greater judgment, it would have been difficult for him to have ſteered the veſſel of the nation aright; and as he could not lay claim to either of theſe qualifications, the defects in his adminiſtration are the more excuſable.

The principal nobility, who had been entruſted with the government of different provinces, had, by Edward's weakneſs, erected them-

themſelves into independant princes, and looked on their offices as hereditary; they aſſumed the name of dukes, and refuſed obedience to the orders of their ſovereign, unleſs they ſuited with their caprice or intereſt. Thus was the royal authority rendered precarious, and the ſafety of the nation, which depended on the union of its nobility, entirely deſtroyed. Another corruption no leſs pernicious to the ſtate, than the former to the royal authority, conſiſted in the neglect of keeping up a regular and well diſciplined militia. Inſtead of a militia of natives, the natural and beſt guard of their country, later kings had taken into their ſervice a body of mercenaries, who, having no employment in the pacific intervals of government, taught the natives vice, and immerſed them in effeminacy. As theſe hirelings were generally Danes, the employing them on ſuch occaſions, not only diſcovered the weakneſs of the nation, but by giving them opportunity of marrying with the beſt families, encreaſed their numbers, and their power to ſuch a degree, that it was dangerous to endeavour to correct their diſorders, or reſtrain their power. To render the nation ſtill more defenceleſs, its navy, which had been ſo numerous and formidable, was entirely neglected, and dwindled away to ſuch a contemptible ſtate, that the Danes once more appeared in the channel, and with

no

no * more than ſeven ſhips, plundered the town of Southampton; after which they waſted the iſle of Thanet, and having ſailed round to Cornwal, landed their men, and burnt the church and monaſtery of St. Peter. The ſame year, a ſmall ſquadron, conſiſting of three ſail, made a deſcent upon Portland in Dorſetſhire, and returned loaden with a conſiderable booty: † while another Daniſh fleet under the command of Godfryd the ſon of Harold, did the ſame in weſt Wales, and after waſting the land of Dywet, with the church of St. David's, were engaged at Llhanwanoc.

‡ Theſe troubles from foreign enemies, were encreaſed by civil wars between the natives; in Wales, Alfred an Engliſh earl having joined with Howel the ſon of Edwal, deſtroyed Brecknock, and waſted a great part of the territories of Owen, prince of ſouth Wales. Eneon the ſon of Owen, and Howel king of north Wales, having raiſed a conſiderable army, marched againſt them to put a ſtop to their incurſions, and falling upon them with great fury, put them to flight, after a very great ſlaughter. § Amidſt theſe confuſions, the nation experienced a great loſs in the death of

* A. D. 981. From *Caradoc's* chronicle.

‡ From the Welch annals in manuſcript.

§ A. D. 983. The city of London was deſtroyed by fire this year according to Higden.

of Ælfer, who, with the true ſpirit of an Engliſhman, withſtood the attacks made by the monks on our conſtitution, and left his government to Ælfric his ſon, who inherited his father's eſtates, but not his virtues. ‖ Three years after his father's deceaſe, he was baniſhed the realm for ſome miſdemeanour, which we have not been able to trace, through the labyrinth of ancient manuſcripts; but it ſeems probable, from his conduct in the future part of his life, that it was on account of ſome treaſonable practices.

The averſion which Ethelred bore to the monks, being daily exaſperated by their behaviour, he made their leader feel the weight of his reſentment, in ſuch a manner, as convinced the nation, that he was reſolved not to be the dupe of their hypocriſy, and diſſimulation. The biſhop of Rocheſter having given him ſome offence, he beſieged the metropolitan city of his dioceſe, but not being able to take it, laid waſte the lands belonging to the Cathedral of St. Andrew's. Dunſtan interpoſed his authority in behalf of the biſhop, but in vain; the king only laughed at his threatning him with the anger of St. Andrew if he did not deſiſt from his enterprize, and proſecuted his ſiege with redoubled vigour. The prelate, being by this time convinced that his threats were fruitleſs, had recourſe to another expedient, which was likely to prove more effectual;

‖ A. D. 986.

tual: he offered Ethelred a ſum of money, on condition that he would raiſe the ſiege, which the king conſenting to, was immediately paid him; but, at the ſame time, Dunſtan curſed him for his avarice, and threatened him with the loſs of his kingdom, by way of puniſhment for his crime.

* The ſucceeding year, the calamities, under which the nation now groaned, were encreaſed by a great mortality among the cattle, and an epidemical flux which carried off great numbers of people. Watchet in Somerſetſhire was deſtroyed by the Danes; and the religious controverſies between the ſecular canons and the monks were extinguiſhed.

But what contributed entirely to the ruin of the latter, was the death of St. Dunſtan their patron, a man of great learning and abilities, but of too much ambition and zeal. Had he confined himſelf entirely to his own province, he might have been deemed as reſpectable a perſon, as the clergy could at that time produce: but hurried away by ambition, he launched beyond his depth into the ſea of politics, and inſtead of acquiring the character of an able ſtateſman, loſt that of a learned and devout prelate, which he otherwiſe would have been honoured with.

† While the Engliſh were engaged in ſupplying the vacant ſee of this famous prelate, the

* A. D. 98.

† From Caradoc's chronicle, A. D. 990.

the Welch were expoſed to all the calamities of civil diſſention. The town of Radnor was ſacked by Meredith, prince of north Wales; which provoking Edwin, the ſon of Eneon, he raiſed a powerful army, and being joined by a body of Engliſh, commanded by earl Adelf, entered into ſouth Wales, plundered Cardigan, and reduced the whole country from thence to St. David's. Meredith, in order to create a diverſion, had in the mean while entered into Glamorganſhire, and deſtroyed all that country by fire and ſword: but leaving his kingdom in north Wales without a force ſufficient to defend it from the invaſions of a foreign enemy, the Danes took advantage of this omiſſion, and, making a deſcent on the iſle of Angleſey, pillaged it without the leaſt reſiſtance.

The Danes either ſatiated with the booty they had acquired, or willing to give themſelves a ſmall reſpite, diſcontinued their ravages. This interval, inſtead of being huſbanded by the Engliſh in preparing themſelves againſt any future attacks, was thrown away in the moſt abject inactivity. Though the natives were utterly unxperienced in arms, no efforts were made to revive warlike diſcipline, and to re-eſtabliſh the militia: all the military force of the nation was ſtill engroſſed by ſome over-grown nobles, who were deaf to the cries of their ſinking country, and too great to be under the command of their ſovereign;

vereign: the only ſoldiers were mercenaries of the Daniſh nation, who carried on a correſpondence with the enemy, and by informing them of the meaſures to be made uſe of againſt them, enabled them to diſconcert every plan that was formed to ſave the nation from impending ruin. Such was the ſtate of the kingdom, when Guthmund and Juſtin, two Daniſh generals, landed with a powerful army at Sheppeſwic or Ipſwich in Eſſex. While they were employed in pillaging the country, Brithnot, duke of the Eaſt-angles, marched with a ſmall body of forces to ſurprize them, but being defeated and ſlain, left the country expoſed to their ravages. As they ſoon penetrated into the heart of the country, and committed the greateſt cruelties, Siricius archbiſhop of Canterbury, Ethelwold ſon of Aylwin duke of the Eaſt-angles, and Alfric duke of Mercia, whoſe territories were moſt expoſed to their ravages, perſuaded Ethelred to purchaſe a peace, by giving them ten thouſand pounds, to deſiſt from further ravages. The ſum being paid; the Danes departed. But this infamous treaty, inſtead of delivering the kingdom from devaſtation, only encouraged it: and the money that was given to the enemy, to buy them off, * was employed by them to conquer the country more effectually.

With this view the Danes appeared the † en-

* See Smollet's tranſlation of Voltaire, vol. i. p. 178.

† A. D. 992.

enſuing year with a conſiderable fleet on the coaſt of the Eaſt-angles; but met with a reception contrary to their expectation. Ethelred, on this occaſion, acted with ſuch a ſpirit as became a king of England; he had called a council to determine what meaſures ſhould be taken in ſo critical a conjuncture, and, by their advice, fitted out a ſtrong fleet, with an intention to block the Danes up in ſome of his harbours. This ſcheme would certainly have been attended with the entire deſtruction of the Daniſh navy, but was fruſtrated by Alfric, who had the command of the expedition. Whatever was his reaſon, whether reſentment for his exile, or the expectation of a conſiderable bribe from the enemy, he betrayed the whole deſign to the Danes, who ſtood out to ſea, to avoid the danger, and were afterwards joined by the traitor. In their flight, they were purſued by the king's fleet, which conſiſted of Londoners and Eaſt-angles, who came up with them, ſlew many thouſands of the Danes, and took one Daniſh ſhip, beſides that in which Alfric himſelf was, who eſcaped with great difficulty.

† The Daniſh expeditions had hitherto been carried on only by private adventurers; but their ſucceſs was ſo great, that the princes now began to put in for their ſhare in the ſpoils of this unhappy country. For this purpoſe they equipped

† A. D. 993.

equipped a formidable fleet, under Swein king of Denmark, and Anlaff king of Norway. They firſt ſacked Banbury in Durham, and thence ſailing up the Humber, took Lindſey, and ravaged the greateſt part of Yorkſhire. An army was aſſembled to put a ſtop to their devaſtations, under the command of Fræna, Godwin, and Frithegiſts, three captains of Daniſh extraction, who betrayed their truſt, and, flying in the beginning of the engagement, left the reſt of the army to be cut in pieces, and the country to be ravaged without any oppoſition by the enemy. After wintering in theſe parts, the two kings ſet ſail, in the ſpring, towards the Thames, without any oppoſition; and, having landed their men, inveſted London, but being beat off in all their aſſaults by the citizens, they raiſed the ſiege, and waſted the adjoining counties of Eſſex, Kent, Suſſex and Hants, with fire and ſword. As they threatened to lay the whole kingdom waſte in the ſame manner, it was reſolved, in a council of the nobility, to give them ſixteen thouſand pounds, and ſupply them with proviſions, on condition of their deſiſting from plunder. The propoſal was embraced by the Danes, who wintered quietly, at Southampton.

Anlaff, in this interval, paid a viſit to Ethelred, who then kept his court at Andover, and being received in an honourable manner, was confirmed by the biſhop, the king receiving

him from his hands. * This laying the foundation of a friendſhip between the two princes, Anlaff gave him ſtrong aſſurances that he would never ſet foot again in his dominions, and, returning home in the ſpring, was as good as his word.

Swein ſet ſail with him for Denmark, but with great reluctance, and Anlaff's ſincerity, inſtead of engaging his approbation, proved the ground of an irreconcileable enmity.‡ Though Anlaff diſcovered no ſuſpicion of the honeſty of the Engliſh, with reſpect to the payment of their contributions, yet Swein ſhowed himſelf ſomewhat apprehenſive on that account. On his departure he left a fleet at Southampton, commanded by an officer, who was charged to preſs the payment of the money; and, in caſe of a delay, to extort it by force of arms. The officer, in purſuance of his order, demanded the execution of the treaty; but Ethelred being put to great difficulties in raiſing the money, he interpreted his delay into a refuſal, and determined to renew the war.

Finding the country, near his ſtation, in a poſture of defence, he made a feint as if he was going for Denmark, but tacking about changed his courſe, and ſailed round the land's end

* A. D. 994.

‡ This narrative is adopted by Rapin, and tranſcribed by Smollet; but the authour will not be anſwerable for its authenticity.

end † in Cornwall. Immediately after this, having entered the river Severn, he made a deſcent on Wales, where he committed great exceſſes. The coaſts of Devonſhire, as well as thoſe of Cornwall, were ſubject to his ravages, and in the former county he plundered the monaſtery of Ordulph in Taviſtock, where he acquired a very conſiderable booty. *After this he penetrated into Dorſetſhire, and having defeated a body of forces ſent againſt him, deſolated the country in a moſt horrible manner.

‡ The Danes having thus ruined the country, and waſted whole provinces without oppoſition, reimbarked, ſailed up the river Thames, and ravaged the Kentiſh coaſt; they then went up the river Medway, as far as Rocheſter, and being met by the king at Canterbury, a battle enſued. The Kentiſhmen behaved on this occaſion with great courage, and made, at firſt, a ſtout reſiſtance: but being over-powered by numbers, were forced at laſt to give way, and were entirely routed by the Danes. The reſiſtance the Engliſh had made on this occaſion, inſtead of charming the enemy, incenſed their fury; they preſſed all the horſes they could meet with, and mounting their troops, ravaged all the weſtern coaſt of Kent with the moſt ſavage barbarity. The loſs which the king had ſuſ-

 tained

† A.D. 997. * A.D. 998. ‡ A.D. 999.

tained in his late defeat, and the miſeries to which the Kentiſhmen were expoſed, at laſt rouzed the nobility. The moſt vigorous methods were put in execution to repreſs the incurſions of the enemy; in a general council it was reſolved to fit out a ſtrong fleet, and raiſe a numerous army. But when the fleet was equipped, it was rendered inactive by affected delays, and falſe pretences; the Danes received intelligence of all our motions, from perſons who probably ſhared with them in the plunder of their country; and this pacific armament ſerved only to create an uſeleſs expence, to oppreſs the people, and render our kingdom contemptible in the eyes of all Europe.

While the coaſts were thus expoſed to the ravages of the Danes, the northern parts of the kingdom were deſolated by Malcolm king of the Scots: he had already over-run Northumberland, and had inveſted Durham. Waltheof, earl of the Northumbrians, was too much worn out by age to think of oppoſing him in the field; he therefore entrenched himſelf very ſtrongly in the city of Bebbanburgh; while his ſon Uthred raiſed a powerful army in Northumberland and Yorkſhire, with which he engaged the Scots, and gained a complete victory; their king himſelf eſcaping with very great difficulty. In order to deter the enemy from any future incurſion, the victor fixed the heads of the ſlain on poles, with

with which he ſurrounded the wall of Durham. Ethelred, being informed of this brave action, ſent for Uthred, and as a teſtimony of his approbation, not only gave him his father's dominions, but likewiſe added Yorkſhire to them.

This little gleam of ſucceſs was not ſufficient to diſperſe the cloud which ſtill hung over the kingdom; all endeavours to defeat the deſigns of the enemy were rendered ineffectual; it was impoſſible to bring the fleet to action, during the next * ſummer, on account of contrary winds; and the whole nation was filled with the whiſpers of diſcontent, and the murmurs of diſaffection. In this critical juncture, when the kingdom had no reſources in itſelf, and ſtood tottering on the very brink of ruin, the Danes were called off to the aſſiſtance of Richard II. duke of Normandy, who was threatened by the king of France with the loſs of his dominions.

† This reſpite, inſtead of being employed by Ethelred in providing for the ſecurity of his dominions, was thrown away in an unneceſſary quarrel with Malcolm, prince of Cumberland. The cauſe of this rupture, as related by a Scotch hiſtorian, was Malcolm's refuſing to contribute his ſhare towards the ſums raiſed for paying the Danes. Ethelred ravaged Cum-

* A. D. 1000.

† The annals place this event in A. D. 1000; but Higden in 1001.

Cumberland on account of his refusal, pretending, at the same time, that he carried on a correspondence with the Danes; but these measures bringing Malcolm to reason, a peace was concluded between the two princes, and Ethelred returned to London, where he kept his usual residence.

The Danes having established Richard in the dukedom of Normandy, returned to England, which they found as defenceless as they left it. They once more renewed their ravages on the sea coast, and penetrated as far as Alton in Hampshire. Ethelward, the high sheriff, collected a body of forces to restrain their incursions, but being inferior to the enemy in numbers, after an obstinate battle, was routed and slain in the field. ‡ After this engagement they sailed for Devonshire, bending their course towards Exeter. Ethelred had now fitted out a fleet under the command of Paleg, who sailed with orders to fight the enemy and prevent them from landing: but the admiral went over to the Danes with the greatest part of the fleet, and frustrated the only hopes which the nation had of extricating itself from its troubles. The Danes, having nothing to oppose their landing, disembarked their forces and invested Exeter; but the inhabitants making a brave defence, they raised the siege, and, in resentment, ravaged all the adjacent

‡ A. D. 1001.

adjacent country. As they carried their exceſſes to an intolerable height, the inhabitants of Devonſhire and Somerſetſhire, grown deſperate by their loſſes, took up arms, and engaged the enemy at Penne in Somerſetſhire; but wanting a proper commander, and having collected but a handful of men, were ſoon put to flight by the Danes. The check the enemy had received in this place was revenged, according to their cuſtom, with great barbarity; the next morning, they burnt Pen and Clifton to the ground, and having acquired a conſiderable booty by plundering, returned with it to their fleet. From hence they proceeded to the Iſle of Wight, where they deſtroyed the town of Weltham, with a great many villages; and having formed magazines in this place, they made irruptions into the adjacent counties, and penetrated a ſecond time into Hampſhire and Dorſetſhire.

* Ethelred, ſeeing his country reduced to ſo low an ebb of miſery, abandoned himſelf to deſpair, and, inſtead of endeavouring to oppoſe the enemy, ſuffered them to continue their ravages without reſiſtance. At length, alarmed with the danger, which increaſed by delay, he ſummoned his council, and by their advice offered the enemy once more a conſiderable ſum, on condition of their deſiſting from their hoſtilities. The Danes demanding the

* A. D. 1002.

the ſum of † twenty-four thouſand pounds, the money was immediately paid, by a ‡ tax laid on the ſubjects, and the nation once more freed from their devaſtations. When the Danes quitted our coaſts, great multitudes of them choſe to ſettle in the kingdom, on account of the mildneſs of the climate and fertility of the country. Their number being conſiderable, they hoped ſtill to enrich themſelves by rapine, and, being ſupported by the natives of the ſame extraction, lived upon the labours of the Engliſh, behaved with incredible inſolence, and gave themſelves up to a perpetual ſcene of debauchery, and wickedneſs. The Engliſh had ſuffered ſo much by the

† *Smollet*, who follows *Rapin* in this particular, ſettles this contribution at thirty thouſand pounds; but that ſum was not paid 'till afterwards.

‡ This tax is by ſome called Danegeld, *i. e.* money paid to the Danes; and was the firſt land-tax known in England. According to the tranſlator of Rapin, it was raiſed by a tax of twelve pence laid on every *hide* of land. A hide of land is by ſome authors calculated to be as much as can be ploughed by one plough in a year; Bede fixes it at as much as can maintain one family; ſome are ſo particular as to ſay, that it contained one hundred acres; and others again aſſert, that the number of acres was uncertain. This tax was afterwards named Hidagium, which was afterwards uſed as a general name for all taxes laid upon land. It was releaſed by Edward the confeſſor, but levied again by William I. and II. After which it was laid aſide by Henry I. and aboliſhed entirely by king Stephen. It is ſuggeſted that this ancient tax might probably be a precedent for our land-tax of three or four ſhillings in the pound, when firſt granted.

the late conteſts with the Danes, that they were grown abject and ſervile, and choſe to endure any inſult, rather than provoke them to revenge, or renew the horrors of war. But the prudence of the Engliſh only augmented the haughtineſs of the Danes; they plainly perceived the weakneſs and timidity of the natives, and acted towards them like perſons who knew none of their demands could be refuſed, and that the property of thoſe they lived with was entirely at their diſpoſal. Their pride and inſolence at laſt grew to ſuch a height, as to become proverbial; and a Lord-Dane, was an expreſſion uſed to imply a perſon who was inſolently proud, and exceſſively tyrannical.

Ethelred finding by experience how little he could depend on his ſubjects, or on a body of mercenaries, in theſe critical conjunctures, reſolved to ſtrengthen himſelf by an alliance, from which he might be aſſiſted and ſecured. The duke of Normandy had hitherto favoured the Danes, his countrymen, in all their expeditions to England; his ports, which were exactly oppoſite to the Engliſh coaſt, ſupplied them with opportunities of making ſudden deſcents, and ſerved them as well for a ſecure retreat in caſe of danger, as for marts to diſpoſe of their plunder. Thinking it poſſible to deprive the enemy of theſe advantages, by forming a cloſe alliance with Richard, duke of Normandy, he ſent ambaſſadours to him to demand

demand his ſiſter Emma in marriage. † The lady was a perſon ſo remarkable for her beauty, that ſhe was called the pearl of Normandy. Her brother readily agreed to the propoſals, and Emma being brought over to England, the nuptials were ſolemnized with great ſplendour.

The king now had a fair proſpect of being freed from the ravages of the Danes, and enjoying his dominions without any moleſtation; but being intoxicated with his good fortune, was induced to take a ſtep which defeated him of every advantage he could propoſe to himſelf from his match, and entailed miſery on his poſterity.

The inſolence of the Danes, who were ſettled in this kingdom, increaſing every day more and more, ſerved as a colour for the treachery of his counſellors. Huna, general of his army, and Edric Streona, who had married Edgitha, the king's ſiſter, were the perſons who inſtigated him to a general maſſacre of the Danes; a ſtep no leſs impolitic than barbarous! They repreſented the exceſſes theſe foreigners were guilty of with the moſt aggravating circumſtances, alarmed him with pretended diſcoveries of a plot formed againſt his life, and by that means inflamed the king's reſentment ſo highly, that he commanded letters to be diſpatched almoſt all over the kingdom,

† A. D. 1002.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The beheading of Gunhild, together with the Massacre of her Son & others of ye Danes. Vol. III. p. 49.

Engravd for Rider's History of England.

doms, ordering the Engliſh to riſe on St. Brice's day, when the Danes were engaged in bathing themſelves, and murder every one within their reſpective counties. The letters were circulated with ſo much ſecrecy, that the Danes received not the leaſt notice of their danger, and were butchered with ſuch circumſtances of barbarity, as humanity would wiſh to be ever covered with the veil of oblivion. Gunhilda, the ſiſter of Swein, who had ſettled in theſe parts, and had become an hoſtage for her brother's obſervation of the laſt treaty, was involved in the general cataſtrophe: but her death was preceded with ſuch inſtances of ſavageneſs, as are ſhocking to human nature. Her huſband and offspring were firſt put to death before her eyes, and then ſhe herſelf was either transfixed with arrows, or, more probably, beheaded. The manner in which ſhe underwent this cruel butchery was really heroic, not a feature in her countenance ſuffered the leaſt change, and with her laſt breath ſhe boldly told her murderers, that her death would involve the kingdom in a long ſeries of miſeries.

Some of the Danes, who ſaw that neither churches, nor altars afforded any ſanctuary from the effects of popular fury, eſcaped on board a veſſel to Denmark, carrying the news of this maſſacre to Swein. The relation which the fugitives gave him of the cruelties practiſed againſt the Danes was ſufficient to pro-

voke a perſon of his ſanguine diſpoſition to revenge: but when they added his ſiſter's cataſtrophe, with all its aggravating circumſtances, to their narrative, he was tranſported with an implacable fury. Determined to take an ample revenge on the Engliſh for their perfidy and barbarity, he aſſembled his council and laid the whole affair before them. No ſooner had they heard the reaſon of their being called, than they unanimouſly reſolved to revenge the death of his ſiſter, and the maſſacre of their countrymen, with all their forces. A conſiderable body of men were ſoon raiſed on this occaſion, the neighbouring countries were invited to join the Danes, with a promiſe of ſharing in their ſpoils, a fleet of three hundred ſail was equipped, and all the nation of Denmark was animated with an inextinguiſhable ſpirit of reſentment and revenge.

† With this formidable armament Swein arrived upon the coaſt of Cornwal, and, having landed his forces, laid the country waſte with a degree of fury that ſhowed his intention was to deſtroy rather than to conquer. Then marching to Exeter, he inveſted that city, which was betrayed to him by Hugh the Norman, whom Emma made governor. The traitor is ſuppoſed, not without reaſon, to have carried on a correſpondence with Swein before his undertaking this expedition, and to have been inſtrumental to its fitting out, by the encourage-

† A. D. 1003.

encouragement he had given to Swein's emiſſaries. The city of Exeter thus falling into the enemies hands, they firſt plundered it of every thing that was valuable, and afterwards razed the fortifications to the ground. From hence the Daniſh monarch marched into Hants, with an intention to penetrate into Wiltſhire. Ethelred, however, had aſſembled an army out of theſe counties, in order to put a ſtop to their ravages. * Alfric, notwithſtanding his former treachery, had been received again into the king's favour, and was entruſted with the command of this army: but, being both inſenſible to favours and puniſhment, he ſtill continued to repeat his perfidies. Notwithſtanding his army burnt with a deſire to engage the enemy, and ſhowed marks of the greateſt intrepidity, when he came in ſight of the Danes, he pretended he was taken ſick, and his forces were obliged to retreat, without coming to an engagement. Swein thus encouraged by the perfidy or cowardice of the Engliſh commanders, deſolated the county of Wiltſhire with incredible fury: animated perhaps by the knowledge of its being the theatre of his

* Ethelred is by ſome authours repreſented as putting out the eyes of Alfric's ſon, in revenge for his father's firſt treachery; but Tyrrel ſeems to be of opinion, from Malmeſbury's account of the tranſaction, that it muſt have been, for ſome repeated acts of his perfidy. Be that is it will, the father's treachery at this time is by ſome accounted for, as ariſing from a ſpirit of revenge on account of the puniſhment of his ſon.

ſiſter's murder. Wilton and old Sarum, were burnt to the ground, after being plundered; and the booty being embarked on board the fleet, Swein returned, not ſatiated with his revenge, to Denmark.

‡ The next ſpring Swein made a ſecond deſcent on the country of the Eaſt-angles, and reduced the city of Norwich to aſhes. Uſkitel knowing too well, the avarice of the Danes, by the conſent of a council, paid them a conſiderable ſum of money, to prevent their ruining the reſt of the country, which was at that time unprepared to make any reſiſtance. The Danes indeed accepted the money, but ſoon forgot the conditions on which they received it. After the treaty, they privately took their route towards Thetford, which Uſkitel being informed of, ordered a party to go to their fleet, and burn it in the harbour, while he raiſed an army to fall on the Danes before they ſhould be able to recover from their confuſion. But his orders not being executed, the enemy, after ſtaying one night in Thetford, ruined it in the ſame manner, as they had done Norwich, and endeavoured to gain their ſhips. Before they could ſecure their retreat, Uſkitel came up with their rear, which he engaged with ſo much fury, that the Danes confeſſed themſelves, they owed their ſafety only to the ſuperiority of their numbers, and muſt inevi-

‡ A. D. 1004.

inevitably have periſhed, had the Engliſh engaged them with their whole army.

Probably the check which the Danes met with at this place, made them more circumſpect in their future attempts, if it did not entirely extinguiſh them for a time. As our hiſtories are ſilent with reſpect to their tranſactions, this may be ſomething more than mere conjecture. Yet the miſeries of the Engliſh were ſtill heightened by a * calamity, which rendered them more wretched than it was in the power of the Danes to make them, providing it was not partly owing to the ravages and devaſtations, they had made in the country. A terrible famine raged in the land, which forced the Danes once more to return to Denmark.

† No ſooner had the Engliſh rejoiced on account of their deliverance from the famine, than their joy was damped by the return of the Danes, who ſeemed implacably bent on their deſtruction. Their fleet appeared off Sandwich in Kent, where they made a deſcent, and waſted the country with fire and ſword. On this occaſion Ethelred exerted himſelf in an extraordinary manner, by putting himſelf at the head of an army, conſiſting of the natives of Weſſex and Mercia. The Danes, who knew their intereſt too well to hazard a battle, continued their ravages at a diſtance from the king's camp; and when he marched againſt

* A. D. 1005. † A. D. 1006.

them, retired on board their fleet, and ſtood off to ſea. In this manner they eluded the vigilance of the Engliſh, and wearied out the king's forces, with marches and countermarches, during the autumn. As the winter approached, they entered into meaſures to ſecure their booty, and retired with it to the iſle of Wight, where they knew themſelves to be ſecure from any ſurprize. As they were informed that the Engliſh army conſiſted of volunteers, who ſerved at their own expence, they did not doubt, but as ſoon as the campaign was over, they would diſband themſelves. The approach of winter confirmed their conjecture, and the Engliſh being broken, they took the opportunity to quit their retreat, and renew their ravages. They penetrated into Hants, after which they marched as far as Reading in Berkſhire, waſting all the country, and deſtroying all the beacons in their way: From hence they marched to Wallingford, which they burnt to the ground; thence they advanced to Cuckamſby hill, and returned to their fleet, with a conſiderable booty, by a different route. An army was raiſed at Kennet in Wiltſhire to cut off their retreat, but this county being then under the command of the arch-traitour Edric, it is probable that he kept them inactive by deſign, and ſuffered the enemy to gain their fleet without moleſtation.

The king was now keeping his chriſtmas in Shropſhire, and greatly alarmed with the de-

vaſtations

vaſtations which the Danes made in the heart of his kingdom. He was too ſenſible that he was betrayed, by perſons within the verge of his palace, but was neither ſagacious, nor courageous enough, to diſcover or puniſh the traitors. He had fitted out fleets, but the enemy, by corrupting his officers, had rendered them inactive; he had raiſed an army, whoſe officers avoided an engagement, and, in ſhort, found it impoſſible to extricate himſelf from his diſtreſſes by thoſe very means, he had in his hands, and which were more than ſufficient for the purpoſe. In his perplexity, he once more had recourſe to the advice of the great council of the nation, who reſolved, that the only probable expedient, to ſave the ſtate, would be to buy a peace of the enemy ‡ The Danes, grown inſolent by their ſucceſs, and reſolved to ruin the country, grew higher in their demands than they had been before, and refuſed to deſiſt from hoſtilities, unleſs the Engliſh paid them § thirty thouſand pounds. This enormous ſum, though raiſed with great difficulty, was the next year given to this rapacious enemy, and purchaſed the kingdom only a ſhort reſpite from their devaſtations.

Edric

‡ A. D. 1007.

§ The Saxon chronicle, W. Malmeſbury as quoted by Higden, Hen. Hunting. Allured, Beverl. Sim. of Durham, Speed, Tyrrel, Rapin, and Dr. Campbell in his naval hiſtory, vol. 1. p 70. fix the ſum only at thirty thouſand pounds, as in the the text. But Milton, Carte, and Smollet at thirty ſix thouſand.

Edric Streon, or Sheen, ſo called, according to Brady, on account of his inſatiable avarice, is ſuppoſed to have perſuaded the king to this infamous treaty, only to enrich his own coffers; and making a merit of his advice, perſuaded the king ſo thoroughly of its expediency, that he not only made him earl of Mercia this year, but likewiſe gave him his daughter Edgitha, in marriage. As his name has already been mentioned in this hiſtory, it will not be unſeaſonable to bring the reader acquainted with his true character. This man, born for the ruin of his country, and worthy of the execration of all poſterity, was of mean birth, but immenſe riches, which he acquired by indirect practices; he was proud, cruel, crafty, and inſinuating; he knew how to diſſemble his own ſentiments, under the appearance of the greateſt openneſs, and eaſily made himſelf a maſter of the ſecrets of others; his eloquence, like that of Cataline's, was more ſhowy, than ſolid, capable of palliating the worſt of crimes, and of perſuading to any attempt; his invention was not leſs fertile in finding out expedients, and his avarice was the ſpring which actuated all his deſigns. Under the appearance of the warmeſt zeal, and the moſt diſintereſted patriotiſm, he dived into all the meaſures of the king's councils, which he made it his buſineſs to betray to his enemies. When ſent to perſuade them to peace, he made uſe of all his eloquence

eloquence to excite them to war; and whenever he saw the king, or Edmund, likely to obtain any advantage, he diverted them by some artifice from improving the opportunity: his reigning passion seems to have been avarice, and his sole view to get money. His life was one continued scene of violence, treachery, and cruelty; and his name might have been used, as a proverbial expression to convey the idea of a wicked minister; if this nation had not produced others that have been equally infamous, and equally execrable. ‖

* A year having elapsed since the conclusion of the last treaty, Swein sent to demand fresh contributions, pretending that the enormous sum he had received the preceding year, was a tribute which the English had engaged to pay him annually. In order to ward off this blow, ‡ Edric was sent embassadour to the court of Denmark, but instead of discharging his commission, inflamed them to a war, by representing to them the weakness of the nation, and the general panic which had seized all ranks of people on the prospect of a rupture.

In the mean while, Ethelred and his council determined to be prepared for all events, and a

‖ Hoveden, Wm. of Malmesb. Higden's polychron, Speed, Brady, and Carte.

* A. D. 1008.

‡ Speed, B. vii. c. 44. p. 362. 3d. edition.

† a general tax was laid for raising and supporting a fleet and army. For this purpose, every three hundred and ten hides of land were obliged to furnish and maintain a stout vessel, and every eight hides a coat of mail and a breast-plate. By this expedient, all the docks in the kingdom were employed in building vessels, and the king's orders carried into execution with so much vigour, that the next year a greater fleet was fitted out, than ever the nation had before. Yet this prodigious armament, after being victualled, and rendezvousing at Sandwich, was rendered unserviceable

† Dr. Campbell judiciously observes, in his naval history, "that this tax, or subsidy, was imposed with judgment, and common consent: it grew therefore, thence forward, an annual charge upon the people, and is that tax we so often meet with, in ancient writers, under the name of *Danegeld:* and from which Edward the confessour is said to have freed his subjects. The reader should distinguish this subsidy, raised upon the English, from the money occasionally paid to the Danes; though they both go under the same denomination. The first was raised at such times, and in such proportions, as the necessity required; and was, properly enough, called *Danegeld*, as it was given to pacify those invaders. The second was a regular, settled imposition, not much unlike our land-tax, and was properly called in the Saxon tongue, *Heregyld*, i. e. soldiers money, and received the name of *Danegeld*; because it was originally given to raise a force to withstand the Danes. It amounted to a vast sum, in those days; since the Saxon chronicle informs us, that by it, when first imposed, there was a prodigious fleet set on foot; such a one as, till then, had not been seen." Campbell's naval history. 8vo. vol. 1. p. 71.

viceable by the diſſenſions that aroſe between the commanders, who had not virtue enough to ſacrifice their private animoſities to the general welfare of their country.

Wulfnoth, father to the famous earl Godwin, was falſly accuſed by Brightric, brother to the traitor Edric, of treaſonable practices; but not caring to run the hazard of a public trial, in a court wherein he knew his enemies would prevail by their intereſt, he made off with twenty ſhips manned by his adherents, turned pirate, and infeſted the ſouthern coaſts. Brightric, filled with rage at this diſapointment, purſued him with a fleet of eighty ſail, but was overtaken himſelf by a great ſtorm, in which many of his ſhips were wrecked, and the remainder driven on ſhore. Wulfnoth, hearing of his diſtreſs, attacked that part of his ſquadron which was ſtranded, and conſumed it with fire. The news of this misfortune coming to the king's ears, who was embarked on board a veſſel at the head of another diviſion, he immediately quitted the fleet, and came on ſhore. ‡ Thus was this great armament rendered unſerviceable, and the treaſure of the kingdom either laviſhed in uſeleſs expeditions, or employed in buying off the enemy.

As ſoon as the Engliſh fleet was diſperſed, the Daniſh navy appeared off Sandwich, commanded by Turkil, and another came at the ſame

‡ A. D. 1009.

ſame time to the iſle of Thanet, under the command of Heming and Anlaff. After the three generals had united their forces, they marched to Canterbury, which would have fallen into their hands, had not the inhabitants redeemed it for three thouſand pounds. Not long after this, they retired with their booty on board their fleet, and, ſailing round to the iſle of Wight, penetrated into Suſſex, Hants, and Berkſhire. The king, with a view of checking their incurſions, ſent orders to every county to raiſe men in its own defence; but ſo deſpicable was his authority, and ſo little were his nobility animated with a love of their country, that no one regarded his orders. Having, with great difficulty, collected an army, which he headed in perſon, he took poſt in an advantageous ſituation, intending to intercept the enemy in their return to their fleet. Ethelred had ſurrounded the Danes in ſuch a manner that it was impoſſible for them to eſcape, and with forces burning for an engagement, was preparing to begin the attack; when Edric, diſſuading him from hazarding a battle, he drew off his forces and ſuffered the Danes to paſs unmoleſted with their booty. Having fixed their winter quarters in the iſle of Thanet, they ravaged the adjacent countries, and made repeated attacks upon the city of London, but were always beat off with great reſolution by the citizens.

In

* In the ſpring they penetrated into Bucks and Oxfordſhire, and deſtroyed the univerſity of Oxford by fire; then dividing their forces, they ravaged the country on both ſides the Thames, but hearing that an army was marching from London to attack them, they paſſed the river at Staines, and having joined their forces, continued on land during the whole winter. In the ſpring, the Danes returned to their fleet, and having repaired their ſhips, they ſailed to Ipſwich. At a place named Ringmere, the brave Uſkitel once more attacked them, but was routed on account of the treachery of a Dane, who ſerved in his army. The traitor, who was named Thyrketel Myrancheſad, by a pretended flight, had occaſioned ſuch a panic in the Engliſh army, that they were ſoon afterwards put into confuſion, and fled with ſo much precipitation, that it was impoſſible for their officers to rally them, or bring them again to the charge. Ethelſtan, the king's ſon, and ſeveral noble perſons were ſlain in the field, and the whole country was abandoned to the fury of the enemy.

The Danes had brought no cavalry with them from Denmark, on account of the difficulty attending the tranſportation, but being now maſters of Eaſt-anglia, a country abounding in horſes, they mounted part of their troops, and by that means not only

* A. D. 1010.

ſtrengthened their army, but likewiſe extended their conqueſts. With this advantage, they penetrated into Eſſex, Huntingdon, Oxfordſhire, Buckingham, Bedford, and Hertfordſhire; then made an incurſion into Northamptonſhire, burnt the town of Northampton, and taking their route into Weſſex, and Wiltſhire, committed every exceſs of brutal fury and rapine.

The † next ſpring they renewed their ravages on both ſides the Thames, penetrating on one ſide as far as Huntingdon, and on the other as far as Wiltſhire and Southampton. Ethelred, inſtead of oppoſing their progreſs, kept himſelf cloſe ſhut up in London. London and Canterbury were the only places of any note that remained in his power; and even the latter fell into the hands of the Danes by treachery. The ‡ city had ſtood a ſiege of nineteen days with great bravery, but the enemy having ſet it it on fire in ſeveral places, § Ælmar a monk, took the opportunity to let the Danes in, while the ſoldiers were employed in extinguiſhing the conflagration. Alphage, the archbiſhop, and ſeveral other perſons of diſtinction, were taken priſoners on this occaſion; as for the reſt of the inhabitants, they were deſtroyed with

† A. D. 1011. ‡ A. D. 1012.

§ This traitor's life had been ſaved by Alphage ſome time before this event.

with ‖ ſuch exceſſes of brutality, as is ſhocking to human nature. Only four monks and eight hundred laymen were left alive, nine out of every ten being delivered over by lot, to deſtruction. So that the number of perſons butchered in this maſſacre, muſt have amounted to at leaſt forty three thouſand two hundred perſons: the circumſtances that attended the captivity of the good prelate are ſuch as diſcover ſigns of the greateſt reſolution and fortitude. The Danes had given him the alternative, either of paying three thouſand pounds by a certain day, or elſe of being put to a cruel death. Alphage boldly refuſed to give them the ſum, and ſtrictly charged all his friends not to pay it for him. The enemy thus diſappointed of their booty fell upon him with their axes, and after having beaten him ſome time with the blunt ſide, delivered him over to the mob, who pelted him with ſtones and cow-heels. The agonies which the archbiſhop was thrown into by theſe cruelties, melted the heart of one Thrum a converted Dane

‖ According to Sim. of Durham, they threw ſome of the unhappy captives over the wall; burnt others; hung up others by their private parts; tore the infants from their mothers breaſts, ſome of which they toſſed on ſpears with all the wantonneſs of barbarity, while others were run over by carts, employed for that ſavage purpoſe. Matrons and virgins were dragged on the ſtones by the hair of their heads, and proſtituted with circumſtances, that convey deteſtation and horror.

into pity, who, with a pious impiety, as Florence expreſſes it, hit him on the head with his axe, and with one blow rendered him inſenſible to pain. *

While the nation was thus ruined by the deſolations of an inſatiate enemy, Ethelred ſummoned his nobles to a council at London, in order to concert ſuch meaſures as might put a ſtop to the fury of the Danes. But inſtead of providing for the good of the kingdom, the members were employed in mutual impeachments: the clergy ſtood up for their privileges, and refuſed to ſtretch out their hands to prevent their country from ſinking, or to contribute any thing towards the public neceſſities. While the council was thus ſquandring away their time in cabals and diſſention, the Danes proceeded in their ravages: the meaſures entered into one month, were ſubverted the next, no commander was found to head the few forces that could be got together; if they had indeed the good fortune to be led againſt the enemy, they refuſed to ſtand a charge, and fled away as ſoon as ever they came within

* The manuſcript of John of Tinmouth's hiſtoria aurea, in the archbiſhop of Canterbury's library at Lambeth, ſays, that the Danes threw the archbiſhop's body, after his murder, into the river, and that it was ſoon taken out again by ſome of his converts. But the Saxon annals relate, that Adnorth and Ælfhume, biſhops of Lincoln, and London, carried it away the next morning, and buried it in St. Paul's cathedral.

within ſight of them; though the danger was general, yet the alarm was partial, every county provided for its own ſafety, without regarding the calamities, which the adjacent one was expoſed to, and the whole nation was nothing but one continued ſcene of anarchy, and deſolation. In this diſtreſs, the king was perſuaded once more to make uſe of the temporary expedient of purchaſing a peace, and, by the advice of Edric, paid † them a greater ſum than ever he had done before.

As ſoon as the Danes had received their contributions, their armies and fleets divided. Turkill, with forty five ſail, ſtaid at London, and entered into the ſervive of Ethelred, on condition of his maintaining and cloathing his men and himſelf, as for the reſt of the Danes, they ſet ſail for their own country.

The terms on which Turkil offered to ſerve the king are ſo low, that the ſuſpicion which ſeveral hiſtorians entertain of his fidelity ſeems to have ſome foundation. He is charged, by Malmeſbury, with holding a ſecret correſpondence with the Danes, and is ſuppoſed to have excited them to make another deſcent on this kingdom. However, as this is no more than mere conjecture, it is propoſed

† The Saxon chronicle and Speed computed it at no more than *eight thouſand pounds*; Milton does not mention the ſum; Daniel, Brady, Rapin, Carte, and Smollet, compute it at forty eight thouſand.

as ſuch to the aſſent of the reader, who is at liberty to receive or reject it.

* Scarce had our unhappy countrymen taſted the ſweets of peace, when Swein arrived with his fleet off Sandwich; without making any ſtay at that place, he ſailed for the Humber, and, going up the Trent, landed at Gainſborough. As ſoon as he came on ſhore, the Northumbrians, with Utred their earl, made him a voluntary ſubmiſſion. Their example was immediately followed by all the country north of Watling-ſtreet, who gave him hoſtages, as a pledge of their fidelity. Having commanded them to ſupply his army with horſes and proviſions, he committed the country he had ſubdued to the care of his ſon Canute, and taking a ſelect body of the Engliſh along with him, marched unto Oxford, which place ſubmitted to him. From thence he advanced to Wincheſter, which received him without any reſiſtance. This ſeries of ſucceſſes induced him to take his route towards London, in hopes of making himſelf as eaſily maſter of that place. In his march he loſt ſeveral of his men in paſſing the Thames, owing to their raſhneſs in endeavouring to make their way over without a bridge. || His at-

* A. D. 1013.

|| This account, which is more particular than that of Rapin, Carte, or Smollet, is taken from Speed, b. vii. c. 44. and Polydore Virgil.

attempt on London was rendered fruitleſs, by the bravery of the inhabitants, who, being animated by the preſence of Ethelred, and Turkil, repelled them in all their attacks, and, in a ſally, committed ſuch ſlaughter, that they were forced to raiſe the ſiege. Swein himſelf was in great danger of being taken in this action, and eſcaped by forced marches to Bath. Hither Ethelm, Earl of Devonſhire, and other great officers, repaired in order to make their ſubmiſſion, and give him hoſtages. Elated with this proſpect of ſucceſs, Swein returned to his ſhips, and aſſumed the title of king of England. After a ſhort ſtay; he once more reſolved upon reducing the city of London, and made great preparations for the ſiege of it: but the city not being in a condition to ſuſtain a long ſiege, the Londoners followed the example of the reſt of the kingdom, ſurrendered without making any defence, acknowledged Swein for their king, and gave him hoſtages as a ſecurity.

* Ethelred thus betrayed by his dukes, deſerted by his ſubjects, deprived of a place of

* Speed relates, that Ethelred had a fierce engagement with the Danes previous to his departure, in which he was defeated, on account of the treachery of his own party. After which he introduces him as haranguing his remaining friends in the following ſpeech, which is tranſcribed becauſe it is curious, though perhaps not authentic,

of safety, and more apprehensive of danger from the treachery of his own subjects, than the courage of his enemies, went first on board the Danish fleet in his service, then lying at Greenwich, and afterwards took refuge in the isle of Wight. From hence he sent Emma, his queen, and his two sons Edward and Elfred, attended with bishop Ælfune, to his brother Richard II. then duke

thentic. "If I myself was void of a paternal regard for the defence of the kingdom, or the administration of justice; or even if ye yourselves were defective in courage for the defence of your native country; I should have brooded over my calamities in silence, and given myself up a prey to dejection. But as this is not the case, I have formed a resolution to rush into the midst of the enemy, and sacrifice my life to my kingdom and my crown. I am certain you must esteem that death to be honourable which is purchased in defence of the liberties of our relations and posterity. Let us then, one and all, resolve to die in so noble a cause. I see that we are abandoned by GOD, and providence; and that our ruin is arrived to its crisis. We are not overcome by the swords, or courage of the enemy, but by the treason and perfidy of our friends. Our navy is betrayed into the hands of the Danes; our armies are weakened by the revolt of our officers; our designs betrayed to the adversary by our counsellors; who, instead of extricating us from our troubles, are continually persuading us to infamous treaties. I myself am disesteemed, and contemptuously termed Ethelred the *unready*: your valour and loyalty is rendered ineffectual by the treachery of your leaders, and our poverty yearly aggravated by the payment of Danegelt, which GOD only knoweth how we are to redress, though it is our duty to

make

duke of Normandy. The treatment which Emma met with from her brother, was ſuitable to the dignity of her birth and the diſtreſſes of her family. Ethelred ſoon followed her, by the duke's invitation, and left his kingdom to the mercy of the conqueror.

Whether the Engliſh looked on the departure of the king as an act of abdication, or were unable to reſiſt the uſurper, Swein was now univerſally acknowledged as king.

The calamities which the nation now groaned under were great beyond deſcription, nothing

make the trial. In vain do we purchaſe a peace with money, in vain do we oblige the Danes to confirm it by oaths, regardleſs of GOD and man, they break through the moſt ſacred ſanctions, and pay not the leaſt regard to equity, to the laws of war, or the laws of nations. So far are we from any proſpect of an alteration in our circumſtances to our advantage, that we have the greateſt reaſon to fear the loſs of our kingdom, and the utter extinction of the Engliſh name and reputation. Seeing therefore our enemies are not at a diſtance, and their ſwords are cloſe to our throats; let us, by our wiſdom and prudence, reſcue ourſelves from danger, or elſe couragiouſly ſheath our ſwords in the bowels of our enemies. Either of theſe expedients I ſhall adopt with the greateſt readineſs, in order to preſerve the ſtate, and ſnatch the nation from irrecoverable ruin." Our authour informs us, "that this pathetic ſpeech affected the audience, but filled them at the time with diſtraction. However, they concluded that it would be in vain to hazard an engagement, which might be defeated by treachery; to ſurrender themſelves to the enemy would be to anticipate their ſervitude and miſery; and to flie before them their eternal ignominy and reproach." *Speed.* edit. III. B. VII. c. 44. p. 364.

thing can give us a better idea of their preſſure, than Speed's emphatic expreſſion, "These were the days of England's mourning." Turkil, who ſtill adhered to Ethelred, or pretended to do ſo, extorted ſupplies and contributions for his fleet; on the other hand, Swein, as a mark of his regal authority, laid an inſupportable tax on his ſubjects for the ſame purpoſe; the ſingle ſhare of the abbey of Croyland amounted to no leſs than twenty thouſand marks; how enormous then muſt have been the amount of the whole? Happy it was for the nation that he did not live long enough to ſee it exacted! For within ſix weeks after Ethelred had retired to Normandy,† Swein died ſuddenly.

Imme-

† Feb. 3, A. D. 1014. Some ſay that he was choaked by rheum. But Florence of Worceſter and Simeon of Durham, give us a remarkable narrative of his death, which is added purely to give the reader a taſte of the legendary narratives which were paſſed on the world for hiſtories in thoſe days. "Swein, ſays our author, was then lying at Gaineſborough, where he had called an aſſembly of his principal officers; and being ſurrounded, in the evening, by his ſoldiers, ſent to demand contribution from the monks in that place, threatening to deſtroy the monaſtery, kill the monks, and to diſturb the martyr's bones that were there interred, in caſe of a refuſal. In the midſt of theſe threats, he was terrified with an apparition of St. Edmund coming to him all in armour, which terrified him ſo, that he cried out, '*Help, help, fellow ſoldiers, look here, king Edmund is coming to kill me.*'

As

Immediately after his death, Canute his ſon, was acknowledged by the Danes, and proclaimed king of England. But the affections of the Engliſh were ſo much alienated by the exactions of his father, that all the great perſons of the kingdom unanimouſly reſolved to recall Ethelred. On this occaſion, a deputation was ſent to Normandy, with offers of their allegiance; and expreſſions of the ſtrongeſt affection and loyalty. The king, rejoiced at this teſtimony of their duty, anſwered their meſſage in the moſt ſubmiſſive terms, promiſing them to redreſs their grievances, to govern them with the greateſt fidelity and kindneſs, and to pardon all

As he uttered theſe words, he received a mortal blow by the ſaint's hands, and fell from his horſe. Lying 'till the duſk of the evening in great torment, he expired, and was buried at York." This narrative is copied from the legend of St. Edmund. John of Tinmouth, in his Hiſtor. aur. a manuſcript belonging to the archbiſhop of Canterbury at Lambeth, relates that the Ghoſt ſtabbed him as he ſet in his chair. But Malmeſbury reports, that St. Edmund appeared to him in his ſleep, and ſmote him whilſt he was in his bed, becauſe he anſwered him unmannerly. Yet, as all conclude that he received a blow, Tyrrel's ſolution of this pretended miracle is both ingenious and probable. He imagines that Swein was wounded by ſome unknown hand, and that the perſon, having the good luck to eſcape undiſcovered, gave occaſion to the monks of St. Edmund's Bury to invent this legend for the honour of their ſaint, and to deter others from violating a place, which was then accounted ſacred.

all acts committed againſt his perſon, if they would return to their allegiance. In conſequence of theſe meaſures, Canute was declared an out-law, and Ethelred, returning ſoon after, was received with the greateſt demonſtrations of joy and affection.

The ardour of the Engliſh was ſo great, to teſtify their loyalty and ſupport their king, that he was ſoon joined by a numerous army, with which he marched into Lindeſey, where Canute then encamped, and was treating with the inhabitants for horſes to mount his cavalry. The Dane aſtoniſhed at the expedition of Ethelred, who had been looked upon hitherto as unready or dilatory to a proverb, declined coming to an engagement, and retreated to his fleet with great precipitation. His abſence leaving the country expoſed to the reſentment of Edward, he took ample ſatisfaction for their adherence to Canute, and laid the whole province under military execution. This act of ſeverity highly provoked the Dane, who, in revenge, having ſlit the noſes, and cut off the hands of his hoſtages, ſet them on ſhore at Sandwich,* and hoiſted ſail, to take poſſeſſion of the throne of Denmark, now vacant by the death of his father.

Ethelred was no ſooner delivered from the Danes, than he forgot the promiſes he had made

* A. D. 1015.

made to his ſubjects. He impoſed an exorbitant tax, amounting to no leſs than twenty one thouſand Pounds, for the maintenance of his fleet, then lying at Greenwich; and entered ſo far into the wicked ſchemes of Edric, as to conſent to the aſſaſſination of † Sigeferth and Morcar, two of his faithful adherents, in order to confiſcate their eſtates.

Canute, having quelled a rebellion raiſed by his brother Harold to deprive him of the kingdom of Denmark, reſumed his intention of making a ſettlement in England. With

† Theſe noblemen were of Daniſh extraction, and were ſo ſtrongly attached to the king, that their fidelity ſhould have been their protection. But being both opulent and of great intereſt, Edric might perhaps have been apprehenſive of their diſconcerting his projects. This might be his motive, among others, for endeavouring to remove them. As he had free acceſs to the king, and was at that time his principal favourite, he privately accuſed theſe noblemen, as traitours; and poſſeſſed Ethelred ſo ſtrongly with their guilt, that he gave him orders to make away with them privately: being apprehenſive that a public execution would prove dangerous to the ſtate and cauſe an inſurrection. To obviate this inconveniency, Edric invited them to an entertainment in his own houſe, and there, contrary to the laws of hoſpitality, had them murdered. As ſoon as they were dead Ethelred ſent Edmund his ſon to ſeize their eſtates, and commanded Algitha, the widow of Sigeferth, to be confined in the monaſtery at Malmeſbury. She had not been confined long in this place before Edmund, the king's eldeſt ſon, ſaw her, on a viſit at the monaſtery, and was ſo captivated with her beauty, that he married her without his father's conſent.

this view he came over at the time, when the diſcontent occaſioned by the death of Sigeferth and Morcar had raiſed ſuch a ferment, that the nation was ripe for an inſurrection. His fleet made the port of Sandwich, and ſailing round Kent, landed the troops in the country of the weſt Saxons. While Canute was employed in ravaging Wiltſhire, Dorſetſhire, and Somerſetſhire, Edric levied an army in Mercia, and Edmund another in the north, to ſtop his progreſs. When the two princes had come within ſight of the Daniſh army, and were preparing every thing for an immediate engagement, Edmund was informed, that Edric intended to betray him to the enemy, and had laid a plot to deprive him of his life. On this account Edmund immediately retreated with his diviſion to a place of ſafety, and left the enemy in poſſeſſion of the field. Edric, now ſeeing his treachery too evident to be palliated by his eloquence, or concealed by his diſſimulation, plucked off the maſk and immediately joined the enemy. His revolt was attended with a circumſtance that was at that juncture fatal to the kingdom, in robbing the king of no leſs than forty of his beſt ſhips.

This acceſſion of ſtrength increaſed the navy of Canute to at leaſt one hundred and ſixty ſail, and rendered him able to execute his projects with little or no difficulty. Mercia,

cia, Wiltshire, and Warwickshire were easily over-run by his armies, who spread ruin and desolation, wherever they came. Edmund, who was both brave and compassionate, was moved by the distresses of his country, once more, to take the field against the enemy. He rouzed his father to second his attempts, and to put himself at the head of his army, in order to strike some decisive blow, that might be a means of retrieving his affairs.

The presence of the king, and the popularity of Edmund, soon brought together a formidable army; but when victory seemed hovering over their heads, Ethelred was diverted from engaging by a report artfully spread by the enemy, that a plot was formed against his life by some of the officers in his army. Edmund thus robbed of his glory, when the destruction of the Danes seemed inevitable, set out for the north, and joining Uthred count of Northumberland, who had married his sister Elfgiva, ravaged those provinces that declared for the enemy. Canute, hearing of the distresses of his adherents, marched to their assistance; and on his entrance into Northumberland, Edmund disbanded his army and went to London; while Uthred made his submission to the Dane. Canute, at first, seemed satisfied with the hostages he had given him, but considering that he was a person of great intrepidity, and of an enterprizing disposition, had him

assassinated, and placed Yric, a Danish chieftain, in his government. Edmund had now no place of refuge but London, whither he went at a very critical juncture. His father Ethelred was then dangerously ill; Canute was preparing a fleet to attack the place, but before he arrived Ethelred died, and was interred in saint Paul's cathedral. In Speed's time his bones were still remaining in the north wall of the chancel, deposited in a chest of grey marble, supported with four pillars covered with a coped stone of the same, near which was the monument of Sebba king of the east Saxons.

The character of this king has been treated with greater freedoms, and blackened with more calumny than that of any other monarch who has sat on the English throne. Malmesbury, and the rest of the Monkish historians, accuse him of drunkenness and lust, of violating the marriage-bed with mistresses of the meanest rank; of being tyrannical and cruel, in taking away the lives of his subjects for pretended crimes; of being covetous, proud, and timorous; void of every great and magnanimous virtue, and so dilatory in all his proceedings, as to have merited the title of *unready*. As satire is more suitable to the genius of some people than praise, and men of an inferior order take a great pleasure in bringing down the characters of kings to a level with their own, it is

no

no wonder that ſeveral modern hiſtorians have joined in the cry againſt the unfortunate Ethelred. Rapin has, in this inſtance, led the way in abuſe, by adopting every calumny of the monkiſh hiſtorians; and adding ſome of his own to them. At his coming to the crown, ſays our authour, he found the kingdom rich and flouriſhing, but, at his death, left it in extreme poverty and deſolation. Smollet is in this particular no more than his copieſt, and is no farther anſwerable for his calumnies, than one who propagates a ſlander, without enquiry into its foundation.

Yet we cannot but take a pleaſure when we diſcover Speed amongſt all this cloud of authors, treating the character of this unfortunate king with a compaſſionate candour, and ſupplying us with a hint not only to account for, but likewiſe to obviate the virulence of the monks. "Ethelred was favourable to married prieſts, and had no great opinion of the lives of opulent and idle monks." This one obſervation is ſufficient to ſhow us, that they were prejudiced againſt him, and as their reſentment was generally expreſſed in virulent reproach, and undeſerved calumnies, we need not wonder at its being vented on the character of Ethelred.

Young and void of education, when he aſcended the throne, he was expoſed to the

artifices of cunning and deſigning men. The ſtate of his kingdom was ſuch, that it required able ſtateſmen to direct the helm; and contained in its very bowels the principles of its deſtruction. 'Tis true, the nation was opulent, but its riches were engroſſed by a few perſons, who had neither the virtue nor wiſdom to part with them for the love of their country. The natives of the country were unarmed and undiſciplined; the navy was neglected and ruined. A mercenary army was maintained in the kingdom at an immenſe expence, which in times of peace fleeced the poor natives, and in time of war could not be confided in. It conſiſted of Danes, the only men in the world that the Engliſh had to fear. The great men having their poſts, by the weakneſs of precedent kings, perpetuatd in their families as an inheritance, grew inſolent, and independant; while they could ſerve their own intereſts, they ſerved the king; but when the intereſts of their country claſhed with their own, they were too great to obey. They who had more ſagacity than wiſdom, could eaſily foreſee, that the nation was approaching to the verge of deſtruction, and reſolved to enrich themſelves out of its ruins. They kept a ſecret correſpondence with the enemy, and, being members of the king's privy council, gave them intelligence of all his meaſures, before it was poſſible for them to be

be executed. The fleet was ſold; the army was corrupt; and ſcarce a man of common honeſty was found in any great poſt throughout the nation. Diſſentions were ſowed among the the counſellors, and every aſſembly was rendered unſerviceable by the private quarrels and cabals of the members. Under theſe circumſtances Ethelred might be contemptuouſly termed, the *unready*; but the dilatorineſs of his meaſures ſeem not ſo much owing to himſelf as his counſellors; and if the term had been applied juſtly, it would have been given to them, rather than to him. Far, very far are we from inſinuting that his conduct can be vindicated in all reſpects; it cannot in reſpect to the extreme fondneſs he ſhewed to Edric, his favourite miniſter; had that villain been timely diſcharged, the fate of the nation might have been protracted; and its ruin, poſſibly prevented. But as he was not the only perfidious perſon in office, even this expedient might have proved ineffectual. The enormous contributions paid the Danes, ſunk the ſpirits of the people, and drained the nation of the only reſource they had to carry on a war with the enemy. But in the juncture, when theſe ſums were given, was there any other expedient, any other reſource remaining? The treachery of the admirals had already ſhewn, what confidence ought to be repoſed in the fleet; and the corruption of the officers declared

clared the same with respect to the army. If courage could have warded off the blow, the courage of Edmund must have done it; but Edmund, at the very point of an engagement, was betrayed, and obliged to draw off his forces to save them and himself from falling the sacrifices of treachery. Ethelred himself did not want courage, and would certainly have defeated his enemy, had not the victory been wrested out of his hands by the whispers of perfidy. To have engaged after that intelligence would have been madness, but to have declined a battle in such circumstances, is what he was authorized to do by prudence and wisdom. The charge therefore which is brought against him, for having lavished the treasure of the kingdom in paying unnecessary contributions, and of having been defective in personal courage, seems, to be rather malicious, than true. The same may be said of the slander he is stigmatized with in respect to his being too fond of wine or women. No one instance occurs throughout the whole course of his reign, to support or countenance so gross a calumny; and on the whole we might conclude, that he was more unfortunate than vicious. The cruelty he was guilty of in the massacre of the Danes, is, indeed, a stain that must always render his memory infamous; yet even this action might receive some palliations which might render it less

crimi-

criminal, though none can make it excuſable. That he poſſeſſed the ſocial virtues to an eminent degree, appears from the debt of filial affection he paid to the manes of his murdered brother, though his own mother was the perpetratour of that horrid crime. The favours which he ſhewed to the married prieſts, are ſtrong indications of the regard he had for religion, and demonſtrate that his zeal was informed by prudence, and directed by knowledge. The laws which were enacted in his reign are the beſt vindications of his character, and ſuch as muſt ſtop the mouth of ſlander, and eraſe all the ſtains of envy. As the beſt laws might be rendered ineffectual by the bribery and corruption of judges, he took effectual care that the ſubject ſhould neither ſuffer from their ignorance, partiality or dilatorineſs. In order to prevent the incroachments on private property, the maſter of a family was made reſponſible for the appearance of every perſon under his roof, and a bondſman, being convicted of a default, was, for the firſt offence, marked with a red hot iron, and for the ſecond, puniſhed with the loſs of life. In order to promote the cauſe of virtue, the king's reeve, or officer, was obliged to require ſureties for the good behaviour of every perſon of ill fame, and in caſe any perſon refuſed to afford that ſatisfaction, he was to be put to death, and buried in an

un-

unhallowed place with common malefactors. Such were the laws he made at Woodſtock. Thoſe which were enacted at Wantage in Berkſhire were not leſs beneficial to the community, nor leſs neceſſary for preſervation of the peace of his dominions. The laws of his anceſtors, relative to the tranquillity of the kingdom, were then revived, and eſpecially that of Ina, wherein quarrels and murders committed in public houſes are ſeverely puniſhed. The trial of all cauſes by a jury of twelve perſons, excluſive of their foreman, and the oath that they take to obſerve the ſtricteſt impartiality and juſtice in all their deciſions, was then ſettled. At another aſſembly held at Ænham, other laws were enacted, which, for their ſingularity, require our notice. The prieſts in thoſe days having carried the indulgence granted them to marry, to ſuch exceſſes as to enjoy a plurality of wives, a law was enacted, wherein they were deprived of this privilege, and prohibited to marry at all. It being a common cuſtom among the Engliſh, in thoſe days, to ſell their children and relations for ſlaves, to the Iriſh; a law was introduced to put a ſtop to this infamous practice. Widows were obliged to continue unmarried for the ſpace of twelve months after the deceaſe of their reſpective huſbands. In order to ſecure the credit of the kingdom as a trading nation, the currency of bad money was reſtrained

ſtrained by a law, which ſeems at preſent worthy of a revival; the perſon who knowingly received bad money was liable to the ſame puniſhment as the coiner; and the coiner was left to the king's diſcretion, who either fined him, or put him to death, according to the nature of his crime. And though the Engliſh navy made ſo contemptible a figure during this king's reign, yet it is evident it was owing to the treachery of its admirals, and not to the neglect of Ethelred: for a law was enacted by him, wherein it was expreſly ordered, that a fleet ſhould be ready and equipped every year, about Eaſter, for the defence of the kingdom. If any perſon damaged any ſhip deſigned for this purpoſe, he was obliged to make it good. But if any one deſtroyed a veſſel, he was obliged to pay the full value of it, and was puniſhed as if guilty of treaſon, or an affront committed againſt the king. It ſeems ſomewhat ſtranger to an impartial perſon, who conſiders theſe laws, that the memory of this king ſhould be treated with ſo much obloquy: but we have already aſſigned a reaſon, why it met with this treatment from the monks; no other can be aſſigned for the malignity of modern hiſtorians, but that they drew their portraits from the monkiſh orignals, which ſhews that their characters are rather a compilation of the ſlanders of their predeceſſours, than a deduction of their

own

own reaſon, from conſidering the general tenour of a perſon's actions. Ethelred, with reſpect to his perſon, was fair, handſome, and genteel; his addreſs was polite, and his behaviour affable; the whole of his defects ſeems to be ſummed up in one, which ſome perſons look upon as inexcuſeable, *he was unfortunate!* Yet moſt of his misfortunes were more owing to the treachery of his friends, than the courage of his enemies.

EDMUND *Ironſide.* A. D. 1016.*

ON the death of Ethelred, the citizens of London immediately proclaimed Edmund, his eldeſt ſon by Ethelgiva his firſt wife. This young prince was of a conſtitution ſo remarkably ſtrong, that he acquired the ſurname of Ironſide. The many ſignal proofs of his courage and conduct contributed to his election at this juncture; and Livignus, archbiſhop of Canterbury, crowned him ſoon after. But the reſt of the biſhops and nobility, being ſummoned by Canute to Southampton, declared for him and ſolemnly renounced the race of Ethelred, after the Dane had taken an oath, that he would govern them faithfully in matters both ſecular and religious. During this tranſ-

* The Polychronicon, &c. place this event in A. D. 1017.

tranſaction, Edmund marched into Weſſex, and, being acknowledged as king by that province, found himſelf able to take the field againſt his rival.

Canute, in the mean while, knowing the vaſt importance of London to Ethelred's affairs, reſolved to make himſelf maſter of it in his abſence. For this purpoſe he ſailed to Greenwich, from whence he marched to London. Having dug a great channel on the Surry ſide, he turned the ſtream of the river, and drew his ſhips up to the weſt ſide of the bridge. After this he ſurrounded the city with his works, and blocked it up in ſuch a manner, that no one could come out or in. Yet the Londoners made a brave defence, and, notwithſtanding Canute made ſeveral vigorous attacks, obliged him to raiſe the ſiege. Canute, thus diſappointed in his firſt attempt, marched into the country of Weſſex, in hopes of meeting Edmund before he was prepared. The two armies met at Penne in Somerſetſhire, and Edmund obtained a complete victory. This defeat ſo weakened Canute's army that he was obliged to retire to Wincheſter to recruit it, and in the mean while ordered another body of Danes to beſiege Saliſbury.

Edmund's army being conſiderably increaſed after his late victory, he marched, after Midſummer, to the relief of this city: and was followed by Canute, who had been

reinforced from Hants and Wiltſhire, and was joined by a conſiderable body, under the command of Edric the traitor, and two noblemen named Almar and Algar.

Edmund waited for the enemy at Sceorſtan, a place on the borders of Glouceſter and Worceſterſhire, where the battle began with great fury. The two oppoſite commanders were ſo well matched for conduct, courage and experience, and their armies ſo equal in number, that the victory was diſputed with equal advantage on both ſides, 'till the night put an end to the combat. The next day the conteſt was renewed with equal fury; but the Danes now began to flag. Edmund, diſcharging the part of a brave ſoldier, and a wiſe commander, had pierced ſo far into the enemies ranks, that victory was on the point of declaring for him: had not Edric, at this juncture, thought of a ſtratagem, which diſpirited the Engliſh, and made them fly. He cut off the head of one Oſmer, who reſembled the prince, and erecting it on the point of a ſpear, called out to the Engliſh to quit the field, telling them that Edmund was ſlain. This expedient would in all probability have had its deſired effect, had not Edmund immediately undeceived his men, by lifting up his beaver and ſhowing them that he was ſtill alive. After this neceſſary act of prudence he marched up towards the traitor, and flung his javelin

lin at him, with ſuch force, that though it miſſed Edric, it pinned the man who ſtood at his ſide to the ſoldier behind him, and both fell dead on the field. The Engliſh, now recovering their courage, renewed the battle with great obſtinacy, but were obliged once more to draw off their forces by the approach of night.

Canute, convinced of the ſtrength of the enemy, and not daring to venture a third engagement, took the opportunity of the night to ſteal away, and join the reſt of his forces, who now formed the blockade of the city of London.

Edmund, in the mean time, marched into Weſſex to recruit his army, which was too weak to attack the Danes after their junction. While he was engaged in this manner Edric made his court to him, and by his pretended contrition for his former conduct, prevailed on him once more to take him into his ſervice, and reſtore him to his favour. Thus joined by the acceſſion of an ally, whoſe revolt muſt weaken the army of the enemy, and ſtrengthened by conſiderable reinforcements, Edmund bravely marched to London, and compelled the Danes to raiſe the ſiege. Part of the Danes having retired to their ſhips for ſafety, and another part advanced up the river to Brentford, Edmund, who had purſued them without affording them the leaſt reſpite, croſſed the

river in their sight, and attacked them with so much fury, as to put them to flight: but so great was the ardour of the English in the pursuit, that several of them were drowned in the river, as they followed the enemy. The last engagement making it necessary for Edmund to recruit his army, he marched for that purpose into Wessex; and Canute took the advantage of this opportunity to attack the city of London once more, both by land and water. The citizens still defending themselves with their usual bravery, the Dane was baffled in all his assaults, and obliged once more to raise the siege. Having embarked his troops, he sailed into the river Orwel, which divides Essex from Suffolk, and laid the country under contributions; from hence he directed his course to the mouth of the Medway, and having landed the horse, ravaged the whole country of Kent.

Edmund having, by this time, collected a very powerful army, crossed the Thames at Brentford, and engaged with the enemy at Ottenford, driving them as far as Sheppy. Had Edmund improved his victory at this place, in all probability this action might have put an end to the war; but listening to the insinuation of Edric, he desisted from the pursuit, and permitted the Danes to secure themselves on board their fleet.

After

After this retreat they went into Eſſex to recruit their forces, and then marched into Mercia, where they put every one to the ſword. Theſe cruelties rouzed Edmund a third time, who collected all the forces he was able, and purſued them with a reſolution to bring them to a deciſive battle. He overtook the enemy's rear at Aſhdown, and provoked them to a general engagement. The bravery of Edmund was ſo remarkably ſignalized on this occaſion, that he had at firſt the advantage, but Edric treacherouſly flying with the wing under his command, ſtruck ſuch a panic in the reſt of the army, that their conſternation and confuſion was ſo great, that it was impoſſible for Edmund, though he made the greateſt efforts, to rally them. As ſoon as the Danes perceived the flight of Edric's wing, they attacked the other with all their forces, and routed it, with a terrible ſlaughter. What added to the weight of this misfortune was, the loſs of ſeveral perſons of diſtinction, the flower of the nobility, and particularly Ulfketel, who, in the time of Swein, was the firſt perſon that had attacked the Daniſh pirates, and ſhowed the nation, that they might be conquered.

This defeat, though aggravated with the moſt deplorable circumſtances, did not extinguiſh the ardour, or depreſs the courage of Edmund; he retired to Glouceſter, to re-

cruit his forces, and was ſo popular on account of his valour, that his army was completed in a very ſhort ſpace. Canute followed him, but not time enough to prevent his being joined by a formidable army, which once more reduced him to the neceſſity of diſputing the crown with him at the head of his troops. As this battle was likely to prove deciſive, the two princes acted with leſs vigour, and more caution than they had done in any former engagement. While the two armies were drawn up facing each other, without any acts of hoſtility on either ſide, by the perſwaſions of * Edric, or ſome other per-

* This is Hoveden's opinion. Ethelred, abbot of Rieval, ſays, that juſt when the battle was going to begin, one of the captains in the Engliſh army, in a ſpeech wherein he repreſents the equality of the two kings with reſpect to perſonal courage, the vaſt effuſion of blood which their quarrel had cauſed the nation, and the little probability there was of determining the war any other way, propoſed that the two princes ſhould fight a duel. This ſpeech being approved by the reſt of the army, they cried out unanimouſly, "let them either fight, or agree." The propoſal, when carried to the two competitors, was immediately embraced by Edmund and Canute, who retired to the iſland of Alney to decide their quarral by ſingle combat. After the combatants had broken their ſpears, they had recourſe to their ſwords, with which they fought ſome time with great addreſs; but Canute beginning to be out of breath, and finding that Edmund had the advantage of him both in ſtrength and youth, propoſed a partition of the kingdom, in a very florid ſpeech. The propoſal pleaſing Edmund, they ran into each

perſon in his army, Edmund was induced to open a conference on the ſubject of peace, in order to prevent any further effuſion of blood. This propoſal being eagerly embraced by both parties, the iſle of Alney in the Severn, was pitched on as the place for the meeting, and a treaty was there concluded in which this kingdom was divided between the two competitors. All the country to the ſouth of the Thames, together with the city of London, and part of the kingdom of Weſſex, was aſſigned to Edmund; and all the

each others arms with the greateſt tranſports, and both armies ſhouted for joy at ſo unexpected, and ſo deſirable a ſight. After this, Canute and Edmund changed their armour and cloaths, in token of friendſhip, and the treaty was concluded, in which the kingdom was divided between them.

The Saxon annals, the author of the Encomium Emmæ, Florence of Worceſter, and the manuſcript authours in the Cottonian library, agree that a peace was made without an engagement between the two armies, but deny the combat between the two kings. William of Malmeſbury confirms the challenge from Edmund to Canute, but adds, that he refuſed it; ſaying, "that though he was no ways inferior to his antagoniſt in perſonal bravery, yet it would be extremely weak in him who was of a diminutive ſtature to engage in a ſingle combat with Edmund who was a perſon of extraordinary ſtrength, and of ſo gigantic a ſize; but ſince both their fathers had formerly divided the kingdom between them, he would willingly conſent to a partition. Theſe terms being accepted by Edmund with ſome reluctance, a peace was immediately concluded, and the Danes ſuffered to retreat to their fleet, with all their plunder."

the reſt of the iſland ceded to * Canute. After the ratification of this treaty, the two kings retired to their reſpective dominions. But Edric being apprehenſive that this reſpite would end in the entire ruin of his intereſt, and give the king both leiſure and opportunity to puniſh him for his former perfidies, was reſolved to prevent the blow. For this purpoſe he prepared two villains, if not his † own ſon, to aſſaſſinate the king and murder him at Oxford. This plot had too much ſucceſs. The unfortunate monarch fell a ſacrifice to his artifices, and he was the firſt ‡ perſon that informed Canute of Edmund's death.

The reign of this king was ſo ſhort, that it ſcarce afforded his virtues time enough to exert themſelves in, or to be conſpicuous. However he huſbanded his moments, and crowd-

* The Saxon annals ſay, that the wages due to the Daniſh army was likewiſe to be paid by the Engliſh.

† The manner of this king's death is variouſly related. Malmeſbury and Brompton report, that he was murdered by two ſervants, hired by Edric for that purpoſe, who thruſt a ſharp piece of iron up his fundament, as he was eaſing nature. But Brompton adds, as the opinion of others, that Edric's ſon ſtabbed him, by his father's order, in the hinder parts with a long ſharp knife, which was left ſticking in the wound.

‡ Huntingdon, and Alred abbot of Rieval, add, that when Edric apprized the king of Edmund's death, he replied, "well, for ſo good a turn, I will advance thy head above all the lords in England." Which he literally fulfilled in his execution, as will appear in the next reign.

CANUTE.

Engrav'd for Rider's History of England.

BRITISH MUSEUM

crowded his narrow ſpan with actions enough to demonſtrate him a perſon of ſtrict juſtice, great benevolence, ſublime generoſity, intrepid courage, and invincible patience. Yet theſe great excellencies were obſcured by the weakneſs he ſhowed in admitting Edric into his favour, after he had known him to have been the ruin of his father by his treachery, and after he had experienced that he had not one good quality or virtue, to compenſate for his vices.

CANUTE *the* GREAT. A. D. 1017.

AS ſoon as Canute heard of the murder of Edmund, he convened a general aſſembly of all the clergy and nobility at London, in order to ſecure the ſucceſſion of the whole kingdom. He was, indeed, able to have made himſelf maſter of it, by force, but was willing to do it rather under the ſanction of authority, than under the appearance of violence. When the aſſembly was met, he artfully availed himſelf of the laſt treaty he had made with the deceaſed king, and pretended to ground his claim to the throne upon what had then paſſed between him and Edmund. For this purpoſe he aſked the nobles, who had been witneſſes to that treaty, whether any articles had been agreed to in behalf of the king's brothers; who were then in Nor-

Normandy? to which they anſwered in the negative. He then proceeded to aſk if Edmund had made any declaration in favour of his own children? here the nobles heſitated, and inſinuating that it was Edmund's deſire, that his ſons ſhould be under his guardianſhip; Canute was put to a great dilemma. However he was reſolved not to ſacrifice his pretenſions to ſuch a mean ſubterfuge, which was probably dictated by himſelf, but forced the ſtates to ſwear allegiance to him, and renounce the race of Edmund for ever.

In the beginning of his reign he divided the kingdom into four great governments, conſiſting of Weſſex, Eaſt-Anglia, Mercia, and Northumberland. Eaſt-Anglia he gave to Thurkyl; Mercia, to the traitor Edric; Northumberland to Yric, and reſerved Weſſex to himſelf.

Though Canute had thus acquired the poſſeſſion of the crown, he could not think himſelf ſecure while any of the other claimants ſurvived. He might juſtly ſuppoſe that the Engliſh ſubmitted to be ruled by a prince of foreign extraction, rather by neceſſity than choice; and that they would take the firſt opportunity to raiſe one of the deſcendants of Cerdic to the throne. To guard againſt any attempt of that kind, he reſolved to make away with Edward and Edmund, the ſons of the late king. To have put them

to

to death in this iſland would have been a very impolitic ſtep, when his authority was in its infancy. He therefore ſent them out of the kingdom under the pretence of their travelling abroad for their improvement. The perſon who had the charge of them was ordered to carry them to Sweden, with inſtructions for getting them aſſaſſinated in that place. The King, notwithſtanding the abhorrence he conceived at this inhuman deſign, was unwilling to incur the reſentment of Canute, by permitting them to take refuge in his dominions, and ſent them to Solomon king of Hungary, who received them with great hoſpitality, and gave them an education ſuitable to their birth.*

The removal of theſe princes was far from freeing the mind of Canute from ſuſpicions. Edwy the brother of Edmund ſtill ſurvived, and made him very uneaſy. He is ſaid to have conſulted with Edric in order to make away with him, and that traitor is reported to have employed one Ethelwald for that purpoſe. But their inſtrument inſtead of entering into their meaſures, only deferred the horrid buſineſs they had tempted him to undertake. And Canute was at laſt obliged to baniſh

* Edmund died in this prince's court, but his brother Edward married Agatha, the queen of Hungary's ſiſter, and daughter of Henry II. emperour of Germany, by whom he had Edgar Atheling and Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland.

baniſh him the kingdom. After Edwy had been ſometime at ſea, he returned privately into the iſland, and retiring to Taviſtock, died in that place.

There ſtill remained one more obſtacle to Canute's repoſe, which it was not in his power to remove by any other means than policy. Alfred and Edward, the ſons of Ethelred by Emma, were now grown up, and were ſtrongly ſupported by their uncle Richard II. duke of Normandy, at whoſe court they then reſided in company with their mother. Richard had already eſpouſed their intereſts ſo far, as to ſend embaſſadours, to demand that moiety of the kingdom, which had belonged to Edmund, in behalf of his nephews; and had enforced his meſſage with threats of uſing force, in caſe of a refuſal. In order to elude the demand, to ingratiate himſelf with the duke, to divert the ſtorm which ſeemed to threaten him, and to recommend himſelf to the affections of the Engliſh, Canute demanded Emma, the mother of the young princes, in marriage, and at the ſame time offered his own ſiſter to the duke. Richard and his ſiſter conſenting to the double marriage, Emma was ſent over, and the wedding ſolemnized * with great ſplendour.

Canute having thus ſecured himſelf in the throne, now employed his thoughts in taking ſuch

* In July 1017.

ſuch precautions, as might prevent any diſturbance from his creatures. Like a wiſe builder, he intended to deſtroy the ſcaffolding, as ſoon as his edifice was finiſhed. He was too well convinced that thoſe who had been falſe to their natural and lawful ſovereign, were likely to be no leſs perfidious to a foreigner, who had ſeized on the throne by force. Edric Streon, ſeems to have been the firſt victim he had doomed to ſacrifice to his ſecurity, and he was ſoon furniſhed with an opportunity of putting his plan in execution by the traitour himſelf; but what was ſtill to his advantage, he was enabled to do it under the ſanction of equity. Edric, thinking his ſervices were not repaid in a manner ſuitable to their importance, had the impudent raſhneſs to upbraid him in public with want of gratitude, telling him "that he had betrayed Ethelred, and had made away with Edmund for his ſake, but the returns he had made him for ſuch important ſervices, were inconſiderable and paltry." Canute enraged at this reproach, turned to the traitour, and with a ſtern look, replied, "villain! thou ſhalt be judged by thy own confeſſion, and ſince thou haſt the impudence to confeſs thyſelf a traitor to both thy former kings, thou ſhalt ſuffer as ſuch." Without giving him time to anſwer, the king ordered him to*

* The circumſtances attending the execution of this infamous

be beheaded, and his body to be thrown into the Thames. As for his head it was erected upon a pole, and fixed upon the higheſt tower or gate in the city of London.

His three ſons were put to death at the ſame time, but it is not known whether their fate was owing to reaſons of ſtate, or to their having been accomplices in the crimes of their father.

In order to break the power of the Engliſh nobility ſtill more, and to ſecure himſelf from any inſurrection on account of Edric's untimely death, Canute proceeded to the execution of Norman, ſon of duke Leofwin, Ethelward ſon of duke Agelmar, Brightric ſon of Alphage, earl of Devonſhire, and others of Edric's moſt conſiderable adherents and relations: Leofric Norman's brother, eſcaped on account of Canute's having a particular regard for him; and

infamous traitour are ſo different, that it is not eaſy to reconcile them. Huntingdon, Malmeſbury and Math. Weſtm. relate that the king ordered him to be ſtrangled in his palace, and thrown out of the window into the Thames; Simeon of Durham and Hoveden ſay, that his body was caſt *upon* the wall of the city, and left there without burial: but ſome copies read *over* the wall. Brompton ſays, that Canute ordered him to be tied hand and foot and flung out of the window into the Thames; but this ſeems not conſiſtent with this writer's aſſerting that his head was fixed on the higheſt gate of the city. Another authour affirms, that Eric ſtruck off his head by Canute's orders.

and not only ſaved his life, but was likewiſe preferred to the government, which had lately been enjoyed by his brother. Theſe executions were followed by the ſeizure of the eſtates of ſeveral of the Engliſh, which were given to ſuch of the Danes, as were the king's creatures and firmly attached to his intereſts. The partiality which Canute ſhowed his countrymen on theſe occaſions, made them ſo inſolent, that they thought they had a right to every thing they laid their hands on; and, if we credit Wallingford, the rapines they were guilty of, under colour of the royal protection, were beyond deſcription.

Canute being ſecure from any inſurrections at home, or invaſion from abroad, began now to exert his authority in a manner which bordered on deſpotiſm, and reſembled rather the character of an enemy, than that of a king. † The nation was taxed eighty two thouſand pounds to pay off the arrears of the Daniſh fleet, which was ſent to Denmark, excepting forty ſail, kept by Canute to guard the coaſts. The chearful manner in which the Engliſh paid this heavy ſubſidy, though impoſed without the leaſt colour of

† A. D. 1018. The ſum which the city of London was aſſeſſed for its ſhare on this occaſion, was ten thouſand five hundred pound; which was at leaſt one ſeventh of the whole; and is a remarkable inſtance of the opulence of this metropolis, even in thoſe early days.

neceſſity, operated ſo ſtrongly on the king; that he reſolved by all means to conciliate their affections, and attach them to his intereſts. With this view, he endeavoured to make himſelf as popular as poſſible, by reeſtabliſhing the laws of the Saxon ‡ monarchs, by incorporating the Engliſh and Danes, and by admitting the former into poſts of profit and dignity. His match with Emma did not contribute a little to ſecond his deſigns, and to wear off the prejudice, which the Engliſh had entertained againſt him on account of his being a foreigner.

§ Canute having thus provided for the internal tranquillity and ſecurity of England, ventured to viſit his own country, in order to put an end to the war, that had broken out between the Danes and the Vandals. In this expedition he took with him a body of Engliſh troops commanded by earl Godwin, and ſuch of the nobility as he thought might raiſe diſturbances in the kingdom during his abſence. Canute's preſence ſeemed abſolutely neceſſary in Denmark, as the Vandals had penetrated very far into the country. As ſoon as he had landed his men, he marched againſt the enemy to give them battle. When he came within ſight of the enemy, it was almoſt dark, on account of which he eh-

‡ The laws of Edgar, or according to Matth. Weſtm. thoſe of Edward the elder.

§ A. D. 1019.

encamped, intending to attack them as ſoon as it was day. But during the night earl Godwin, at the head of the Engliſh troops, ſtole out of the camp; and having ſurprized the enemy, charged them with ſo much fury, that they were put to flight; and Canute miſſing the earl next morning, found he had obtained a complete victory, before he was informed that there had been a battle. This brave action endeared the Engliſh to Canute for ever after; and recommended Godwin ſo highly to his eſteem, that he gave him ‖ Thyra his ſiſter in-law in marriage, and continued him in all the power and dignity of a duke, at a time when he was reſolved to aboliſh that title, as fatal to the kingdom and dangerous to the royal authority.

As ſoon as he had finiſhed the war, he returned to England, and there began to put his ſcheme in execution. The great perſonages, with whom he had divided the kingdom, were the firſt ſufferers by his intended reformation. * He convoked a *mycel gemot*, or great council at Cirenceſter, wherein Ethelward an Engliſh duke was outlawed, and Eric duke of Northumberland was baniſhed the kingdom. Theſe politic meaſures rendered Canute very popular, and recommended him very much to the eſteem of the

‖ He had one ſon by this lady, who was unfortunately drowned in the Thames.

* A. D. 1020.

Engliſh. To ingratiate himſelf ſtill more; and to attach them more ſtrongly to his intereſt, he pretended great compunction for the blood he had ſhed in making his way to the throne, built a church at Aſhdon; a place remarkable for a great battle he had fought with Edmund; chantries for the ſouls of the Engliſh that had been ſlain in the field: repaired ſeveral monaſteries, and erected one at Bury, in honour of St. Edmund, who was particularly revereneed by the Engliſh.

† The ſucceeding year he held a parliament at Wincheſter, in which he baniſhed Thurkyl, who had been concerned in the murder of archbiſhop Alphage, hoping by this action to gain the affections of the Engliſh, who eſteemed the deceaſed prelate as a ſaint.

‡ Canute went the next year on board his fleet, in which he ſailed to the Iſle of Wight; but as the annals are ſilent with reſpect to the reaſon of his undertaking this expedition, it may be allowed us to conjecture, that it was in order to keep his mariners in exerciſe, and to inform himſelf of the fidelity of his cruiſers.

The character of theſe times ſeems to have been ſuch as laid both the nobility and vulgar open to the artifices of deſigning perſons: any little action of ſuperſtition was ſufficient to gain their affections, and to make

† A. D. 1021. ‡ A. D. 1022.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CANUTE commands the Waves of the Sea not to wet him.

Engravd for Rider's History of England.

make the actor eſteemed for his piety and virtue. Canute knew as well as any monarch how to turn this diſpoſition to his advantage; he had already obliterated all the ideas of his former exceſſes from the memory of the Engliſh; he had taken ſuch ſteps in the puniſhment of thoſe perſons who had incurred their reſentment, as juſtly entitled him to their affections: he was now determined to take a ſtep higher and to ſecure their veneration. ‖ For this purpoſe, when the reliques of Alphage were to be removed from London to Canterbury, he was preſent, and aſſiſted with his own hands in their removal. The effect which ſuch an act of external piety muſt have on the minds of the Engliſh, is eaſy to be conceived; in a word, it was ſuch as anſwered his views, and ſatisfied his wiſhes.

Having enjoyed the fruits of his popularity for the ſpace of a § whole year, which he ſpent in ſuch acts as conduced to keep the idea of his favours freſh in the memories of his ſubjects; he was called abroad to defend his dominions againſt the Swedes, who had * attacked them both by land and ſea.

‖ A. D. 1023. § A. D. 1025.

* Krantius, a Daniſh hiſtorian, ſays, that Anlaff, or Olave, king of Sweden, was urged to this invaſion, on account of Canute's neglecting his intereſts in the competition between him and Edmund Ironſide.

ſea. Alarmed at this attempt he ſet ſail for Denmark, and engaged Ulf and Eglaff, the two Swediſh commanders, but being defeated in a pitched battle, he was obliged to return the ſame year to England.

This defeat ſeems to have operated very ſtrongly on the mind of Canute, who ſpent ſome time in preparing for a ſecond attack. But while he was thus employed, a revolution happened in Norway, which claimed his attention, and compenſated him for his trouble. The Norwegians had for a long time ſubſiſted on rapine and plunder, but during the reign of Olave, were reſtrained entirely from ſuch acts of injuſtice and cruelty. His moderation and virtue rendered him odious to his ſubjects, and the reſtraint they were under to copy his example made them reſolve to dethrone him. Canute, who held a correſpondence with the Norwegians, was informed of their diſcontents, ſent over a large ſum of money to ſecure their nobles in his intereſts, and promiſed to come in perſon to invade the kingdom and redreſs their grievances. Thus ſecure of ſucceſs in his intended expedition, he † ſailed with fifty ſhips to Norway, and being joined by the malecontents, obliged Olave to retire into Sweden for ſafety.

Canute having thus returned ſucceſsful from his late expedition, and honoured with the

† A. D. 1028.

the title of king ‡ of England, Denmark and Norway, he might have expected to have finiſhed his days in tranquility: but immediately after his return; was laid under a neceſſity of baniſhing Hacun, a Daniſh earl, who had married his niece Gunhilda without his conſent. Whether jealouſly of the growing intereſt of the earl after his alliance, or any ſecret intelligence he had received concerning his meaſures, might have induced him to have recourſe to this expedient, is a point not perfectly ſettled by antient records.

‖ Olave, king of Norway, having been aſſiſted with forces by the Swedes, attempted, during Canute's abſence, to recover his dominions, but being deſerted by ſome of his forces, and over-powered by numbers, loſt his life in the battle, at a place called Stickalſtad.

This danger was no ſooner ſurmounted, than Canute found himſelf involved in another that ſeemed to threaten him with the loſs of the kingdom of England. The dukedom of Norway having devolved to Robert, the ſon of Richard II. who commiſerated the fate of his couſins Alfred and Edward, ſent ambaſſadours to Canute to demand the reſtitution of their father's kingdom. The Engliſh monarch diſregarding his embaſſy, he

‡ A. D. 1029. ‖ A. D. 1030.

he equipped a powerful fleet, intending to recover their inheritance by force; but his fleet was ſo much damaged by a ſtorm, that they were obliged to put back to refit, and the enterprize miſcarried. Canute being by theſe means convinced that Richard was reſolved to aſſert the right of his couſins, and that he was a formidable enemy, ſent his ambaſſadours to Normandy with an offer of reſigning half of his kingdom to the young princes; but artfully ſpun out the treaty to ſuch a length, that Richard was obliged to ſet out for Jeruſalem before it was ratified or concluded, and to poſtpone his intended expedition, 'till his return.

Canute having thus artfully diverted the ſtorm with which he was threatened, applied himſelf to ſuch acts, as conduced to eraze the idea of his former cruelties out of the minds of his ſubjects, and to make atonement for his former ſins by ſuch acts of piety, as were eſteemed in thoſe ages a ſufficient expiation. He gave the port of Sandwich, with all its iſſues and profits to Chriſt's Church in Canterbury: he likewiſe founded a monaſtery of Benedictines in Norfolk, which, from its ſituation, was denominated St. Bennet's in Holme. * He likewiſe granted a Charter to the

* From a manuſcript copy of Florence of Worceſter in the Bodleian library, Oxford. Leland, who ſaw this town and monaſtery, gives us a deſcription of it, which claims

the monaſtery of St. Edmundſbury, confirming it in all its lands and privileges. Theſe inſtances of Canute's penitence, were very ſtriking, and to ſet them out of the reach of ſuſpicion, he reſolved on a pilgrimage to Rome, which was ſufficient of itſelf to eſtabliſh an opinion of his piety, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt.

The

claims our notice. "The city, for its ſituation, exceeds any that the ſun ever ſaw; it ſeems, as it were, to hang upon a gentle deſcent, and is waſhed on the eaſt ſide with a little river. Its monaſtery is not leſs noble, whether we conſider it with reſpect to its endowment, its extent, or its unparalleled magnificence. One might even take the monaſtery itſelf for a city, it has ſo many gates, ſome of which are braſs, is adorned with ſo many towers, and has likewiſe a church, which can not be exceeded in grandeur, or magnificence. To this we may add three more churches, which are contiguous, and are as it were appendages to this, which are likewiſe admirable for their beauty and architecture." Canute enriched the monaſtery, with very conſiderable preſents, brought in the monks with their abbot, granted it the whole town, as well as other eſtates for its maintenance, and offered his crown to the martyr. The pope gave it large immunities, exempting it from the juriſdiction of the biſhop of the dioceſe. Beſides the offerings that were brought to Edmund's tomb, its revenus amounted to one thouſand five hundred and ſixty pounds yearly." Camden, whom we are indebted to for this deſcription, concludes, "that the very carcaſs of its ancient grandeur hath ſomething of beauty, and its very ruins are ſo ſplendid, that it is impoſſible to view them without feeling admiration blended with pity." *Gibſon's* CAMDEN, vol. I. p. 439.

The figure he made at Rome, together with the character he had acquired for his bravery, secured him the respect of all the great personages, who were then resident at that metropolis. Conrade the emperour of Germany, was at that time absent from his kingdom on the same religious errand, and entered into a treaty with Canute which was for the advantage of the English. For, amidst the exercises of religion, Canute attended to the interests of his subjects, and purchased from Rodolph king of France, and other princes whose dominions he made in his way, an exemption from all tolls and duties, in favour of the English merchants or pilgrims who should be obliged to pass through their territories. He likewise made remonstrances to the pope on account of the exorbitant sums paid by the bishops, on the reception of their palls, and prevailed on him to redress this grievance.* During his

* Dr. Campbell justly observes in his naval history, that the Danes, after the first fury of war was over, adopted the maxims of the Saxons, with whom they were incorporated, and applied themselves to trade: by these means they were enabled to pay those prodigious taxes, that, from time to time, were levied upon them by their monarchs; and the treasury of Canute the Great was so amply supply'd, that, when he took a journey to Rome, he made a more magnificent appearance, than any christian prince, who, in those superstitious times, had honoured that capital with his presence; and is recorded to have

his ſtay, he made ſeveral rich preſents to St. Peter's church, obtained ſome privileges for the Engliſh ſchool in Rome, and having ſolemnly vowed to St. Peter and Paul an entire amendment of his conduct, and the ſtricteſt obſervance of juſtice and piety, returned home loaded with many curious reliques which he had purchaſed. In his way he put into Denmark, whence he wrote a letter, addreſſed to the nobility, clergy, and commonalty; which breathes ſuch a ſpirit of piety, integrity, humanity, and juſtice, as muſt endear his memory to all thoſe who find any ſeeds of thoſe virtues in their own boſoms. He ſtrictly charges his officers to redreſs all grievances, and abſtain from every degree of oppreſſion; gives them aſſurances that on his return, he ſhould enforce his precepts by his own example; declares the intention of his journey to Rome; deſcribes the manner in which he was received by the pope, and other great perſonages; gives a minute detail of the advantages he had obtained for his ſubjects, and concludes with a ſolemn adjuration to his miniſters to ſee to the due payment of eccleſiaſtical duties, adding ſevere menaces againſt thoſe, whom he ſhould find any ways culpable on his return.

After a ſhort ſtay at Denmark, Canute

have ſpent, and given away, ſuch immenſe ſums of money, as filled all Europe with amazement." Campbell's naval hiſtory, 8vo. vol. 1. p. 95.

once more visited England; and practised the professions he had made in his absence. All the laws that had been made by former kings of England, particularly those which had been enacted by Ethelred, were put in force, several new ones were made suitable to the times, and every method was taken to render his subjects both flourishing and happy.

England had hitherto enjoyed a profound peace, but Canute thought himself obliged in honour to undertake an expedition against the Scots, on the following occasion. Duncan, grandson to Malcolm II. king of Scotland, was heir apparent to that kingdom, and was in possession of Cumberland, a fief of the kingdom of England. Canute had summoned him several times to do him homage on that account, but Duncan as often refused it, declaring it was not due to him, and was a right which belonged only to the kings of England, who were born Englishmen. This answer was resented by Canute as a great affront, and as soon as he had rested himself after his pilgrimage, he set out with a great army to chastise Duncan for his insolence, and to reduce Cumberland. Malcolm espousing his grandson's quarrel met Canute with a strong army, and prepared to give him battle. But the prelates and nobility interposing, brought both parties to an accommodation, and prevented the effusion

effuſion of blood. In the articles ſigned by the contending parties conceſſions were made on both ſides, it being agreed that Duncan, and his heirs ſhould for the future hold Cumberland as freely as any of their predeceſſors, and ſhould pay homage to the king of England and his ſucceſſors for that fief.

After this accommodation Canute once more applied himſelf to ſuch acts of piety as were conducive to the advantage of his ſubjects, and the eſtabliſhment of his character. The few years which remained of his reign were paſſed in the greateſt tranquillity, without any diſturbance from diſcontent or malevolence. And dying at Shaftſbury, he was buried at Wincheſter. †

† A. D. 1035. He left two ſons by his firſt wife Alfwin, daughter of Elfhelm earl of Northampton, who were named Swein, and Harold; and by Emma who ſurvived him, a ſon named Hardicnute, and a daughter named Gunhilda. Swein, was placed by his father on the throne of Norway. Harold was afterwards king of England. Hardicnute aſcended the throne of Denmark. Gunhilda his daughter was married to the emperour Henry iii. Being a lady of remarkable beauty, her huſband grew jealous of her, and ſhe being accuſed of adultery, a duel enſued, which was the uſual method of trial in theſe ages. The accuſer being a perſon of gigantic ſize, and extraordinary ſtrength, no perſon was bold enough to undertake the vindication of Gunhilda's innocence; till her page, who was but a ſtripling, in compariſon of his antagoniſt, appeared in the liſt, and offered to engage her accuſer. In the combat the youth having the good fortune to

No king ever deserved a more contradictory character than this, nor can any administration produce a greater variety of conduct. Canute made his way to the throne by such measures, as discovered him to be naturally cruel; and established his authority by such acts of injustice, as plainly indicated that he was inspired with an ambition, that regarded nothing but the accomplishment of his wishes. Though determined to seize on the crown, he had the subtilty to give his designs the sanction of law, and by suborning his creatures to attest falshood, set aside the pretensions of such as ought to have succeeded by the custom of the kingdom, and by the laws of nations. The manner in which

to cut the sinews of his antagonist's legs with one blow, followed his advantage with so much vigour, that he felled him to the ground with another, and then cut his head off, which he presented to his lady. After Gunhilda's honour had thus been vindicated by the valour of her English page, she thought it a proper time to show her resentment for the affront her husband had passed upon her by his credulity, and having renounced his bed, notwithstanding his entreaties to the contrary, turned nun at Bruges in Flanders. After her death, she was buried in the Collegiate church of Donation, and her monument in Speed's time, was then to be seen near the north door of that sacred edifice. The story of this engagement, together with the sollicitation of the emperour to divert her from her resolution of taking the veil, has been extremely well expressed by Casali, and justly deserved the prize assigned it by the *Society for the encouragement of arts and sciences.*

The Vindication of GUNHILDA's Chastity.

Engrav'd for Rider's History of England.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

which he behaved to the perſons, who had been his inſtruments in this act of injuſtice, was ſuch as declares the higheſt ingratitude. The partiality he at firſt ſhowed the Danes, was highly injurious to the conſtitution which he pretended to govern by, and the immenſe contributions he exacted, under the colour of a tax, was ſuch as ſhowed him to be rather an uſurper, than a lawful king, rather an enemy, than a father to his ſubjects. Even the favourable part of his character admits of ſome blame; and the acts of ſuperſtition, which he performed to atone for his former cruelties, may be ſuſpected to be incited by policy, and tinctured with ambition. The grandeur in which he appeared at Rome, and the large ſums he expended there, or gave away in his journey, may be charged with oſtentation, if not with profuſion. Yet with all his faults it muſt be confeſſed, that he was poſſeſſed of great virtues, and was certainly a perſon of great abilities. The wars he was engaged in demonſtrate, that he was not wanting in perſonal courage; and the manner in which he endeared himſelf to the Engliſh, in the latter part of his reign, ſhews him to have been a conſummate ſtateſman. He ſeemed to have been perfectly acquainted with mankind, and able to turn the various diſpoſitions of his ſubjects to his advantage. No monarch ever raiſed popular odium ſo high, or allayed it ſo effectually as

Canute. In the beginning of his government he appeared the tyrant, in the latter end of it he was univerſally eſteemed the father and friend of his ſubjects. The variety of his victories did not entitle him ſo much to the epithet of Great, as the virtues which he practiſed during the peaceable interval of his adminiſtration. It was in that period that he manifeſted his piety, his charity and his equity. His continence was great, his addreſs engaging, his affability remarkable, his mercy extenſive. His love of peace manifeſted itſelf in his encouragement of thoſe who were of a pacific diſpoſition, and his ſtrict regard to juſtice, in his ſeverity to thoſe who were guilty of any acts of robbery or violence. The tender concern he had for the welfare and property of the meaneſt of his ſubjects is evident from the letter he wrote to his officers during his pilgrimage, and ſhould be looked on as a ſtandard by which future monarchs and governours ſhould regulate their conduct. During the calm of peace, he applied his thoughts to the ſublime ſtudy of legiſlation, and by the number of his laws ſeems to have made it his ſtudy to leave no grievance without redreſs. For the impartial adminiſtration of juſtice, he orders that no diſtinction ſhould be made between rich or poor, and recommends mercy in all deciſions, that no perſon ſhould be put to death for a ſmall offence. And, in caſe any judge

judge perverted judgment out of hatred, or for the ſake of lucre, he was to be fined the value of his head, and removed from his place. Perſons guilty of conſpiracy againſt the king were puniſhed with loſs of life, and confiſcation of all their goods and eſtates. The demoliſhing or burning of houſes, theft, murther, and treaſon, were declared offences for which no ſatisfaction could be made, by way of mulct and compenſation. In order to prevent injury by too rigid an exaction of juſtice, he provided that mercy ſhould be ſhown to ſuch who truly and unfeignedly amended, and that a diſtinction ſhould be made in ſentences according to the ſeveral degrees of guilt, diſcovered in the commiſſion of crimes. To manifeſt how tender he was of the rights of his ſubjects, he orders his officers to make proviſions for his houſhold from the crown lands only; and if guilty of forcing any perſon to furniſh them, ſubjects them to a grievous penalty. In caſe of a perſon's dying inteſtate, he orders that his lord ſhould take nothing but what is due to him as an herriot, and that his eſtate ſhould be divided between his widow and children. The regulations he preſcribed with reſpect to married perſons, were highly conducive to make that ſtate reſpectable, and to prevent incontinence particularly in the fair ſex. A married woman convicted of adultery, was to be puniſhed by loſs

loſs of ears, and with ſlitting her noſe. A widow was not permitted to marry again within twelve months after the deceaſe of her huſband, on penalty of loſing her jointure and dower, and the perſon who married her, was likewiſe fined the value of his head to the king, or to whomſoever he aſſigned it. The care that was taken of the game, by confining a perſon to his own grounds, and forbidding him to hunt in the king's foreſts, is perhaps beneath our notice. The eccleſiaſtical laws enacted by this monarch are not leſs curious than the civil, and ſhow that he extended his concern not only to the ſecular, but likewiſe the ſpiritual welfare of his kingdom. With this view he enacted, that no fairs, markets, or ſecular actions ſhould be practiſed on the lord's day. All chriſtians were obliged to receive the euchariſt or ſacrament of the lord's ſupper, three times a year, at leaſt. In order to oblige the clergy to live ſuitable to their character, and to ſhow, that they were not exempted by their order from the civil juriſdiction, he enacted, that if a prieſt was guilty of murder, or any other notorious crime, he ſhould be deprived of his order or dignity, in order to his receiving condign puniſhment.

From this rude tranſcript of his laws we may be able to form a judgment of the character of this monarch, and to add ſome features to his portrait, which have been omitted

omitted by our predeceſſors. As they breathe nothing but mercy, and require ſuch a ſtrict regard to juſtice, we may be authorized to ſay, that though Canute ſhowed cruelty to be his natural diſpoſition in the dawn of his reign, yet he has plainly manifeſted that he had conquered his nature, and that mercy was not leſs habitual to him in the meridian of his adminiſtration. The regard he had to the due obſervance of the Lord's day, and the neceſſity he laid upon every one of his ſubjects to receive the ſacrament, may fairly be uſed as an argument in behalf of his own piety and devotion. If we ſtop here we ſhould leave his character very imperfect, and deprive it of an embelliſhment, that ſets it off to great advantage. Though ſurrounded with flatterers, he was impregnable to all their attacks, and in the midſt of victories poſſeſſed humility. An inſtance of his behaviour in private life has been handed down, which at once ſhows us that he was poſſeſſed of a large fund of good ſenſe, and a ſtrong abhorrence of flattery.* One day, as he walked on the ſea-ſhore at Southampton, accompanied by his courtiers, who offered him the groſſeſt flattery, comparing him to the greateſt heroes of antiquity, and aſſerting that his power was more than human: he ordered a chair to be placed

* Huntingdon, lib. vi. Florileg. in A. D. 1035.

placed on the beach, while the tide was coming in. Sitting down, with a majeſtic air, he thus addreſſed himſelf to the ſea: "Thou ſea art a part of my dominion, and the land whereon I ſit is mine: no one ever broke my commands with impunity, I therefore charge thee to come no farther upon my land, and not to preſume to wet either my feet or robe, who am thy ſovereign." But the ſea, as Huntingdon expreſſes it, coming rolling on as before, and without any reſpect, not only wet the ſkirts of his robe, but likewiſe daſhed his thighs. On which he roſe up ſuddenly, and addreſſing himſelf to his attendants, deſired them to conſider how narrow and limited the power of kings is. Adding, that the title of king was properly applied to the deity alone, who reduces the heaven, earth, and ſea to obedience, and holds them in everlaſting ſubjection. From this period he would never wear his crown, but ordered it to be placed on the head of a crucifix in the cathedral church of Wincheſter. The uſe that may be made of this celebrated circumſtance is left to the reader's own reflection; who cannot conſider the reign of this king without concluding, with Tyrrel, that it had been well for the kingdom, if Canute had never aſcended the throne, or had ſat in it much longer.

HAROLD,

HAROLD, *ſurnamed* HAREFOOT.
A. D. 1036.

CANUTE had, the year before his death, placed his ſon Hardicnute on the throne of Denmark, and his ſon Swein on that of Norway. But as the ſucceſſion to the crown of England was left undetermined, it was conteſted by ſeveral competitors. When the engliſh prelates and nobility met for the election of a ſovereign, there appeared no leſs, than three parties in the council, one of which was for Hardicnute, as deſcended from a more honourable mother, another for Harold as being the elder brother, and a third for the ſons of Ethelred, at that time in Normandy. As the laſt mentioned claimaints were deſtitute of friends, and had loſt a powerful protectour by the death of their couſins, the competitors were reduced to two, which were Hardicnute, and Harold. The pretenſions of the former were founded on the marriage treaty between Canute and his mother Emma, wherein it was ſtipulated, that her children ſhould ſucceed to the crown of England: and thoſe of * Harold were grounded on a will of ſuſpected credit.

The

* He was the ſon of Canute by Elfgive, daughter to Alfhelm, duke of Mercia, who is, by ſome authors, aſſerted to have been no more than his concubine. She is ſuppoſed,

The Danes, ſettled in London, together with the Mercians and Northumbrians declared for Harold; but Agelnoth, the archbiſhop of Canterbury, with the reſt of the Engliſh, ſtrenuouſly eſpouſed the intereſt of Hardicnute, as being the ſon of Emma. The conteſt was carried on with ſo much animoſity by the two parties, that the nation was on the verge of being plunged into a civil war, when a general aſſembly, which was convened at Oxford, determined the diſpute in an amicable manner. The country northward of the Thames was allotted to Harold, and the reſt of England to Hardicnute. As Hardicnute was then abſent in Denmark, it was reſolved, that his mother Emma ſhould govern his part of the kingdom under the direction of earl Godwin, and ſhould have Wincheſter aſſigned to her, as the place of her reſidence.

Though Harold was thus elected king, the archbiſhop continued reſolute in the cauſe he had eſpouſed, and refuſed to deliver him the royal robes; which provoked Harold

ſuppoſed, by Diceto, to have pretended child-birth, in order to ſecure the affections of her huſband, and to have paſſed Harold, who was no more than a ſhoemaker's ſon, upon him for her own. Speed imagines that the condition of Elfgive, who lived in diſdain, and died in diſgrace, rather cauſed this report to be ſpread, than any ſuch baſeneſs of birth in the ſon. Speed. 3d. edit. b. viii. c. 3. p. 386.

Harold ſo highly, that he reſented the affront, on every occaſion, upon the whole body of the clergy. The firſt ſtep he took, after his election, was, to ſeize on his father's treaſure at Wincheſter, which of right belonged to Emma his ſtepmother.

With this advantage he knew how to deal with Godwin, who on a ſudden loſt all his zeal for Hardicnute's intereſt, and eſpouſed that of his rival.

* This nobleman, who was not leſs politic than ambitious, ſoon perſuaded the Weſt-Saxons that they were neglected by Hardicnute, and made his abſence a pretext for declaring Harold king of the whole iſland.

Emma, thus deprived of her regency, very prudently ſmothered her reſentment, and applied herſelf entirely to works of piety and devotion. Godwin, who had experienced the greatneſs of her talents, was ſuſpicious of her conduct, and inſinuated to the king, that his crown was not ſafe, while the children of Emma were alive.

Harold was ſoon convinced of the truth of his remark, and contrived an expedient to get the young princes in his power. For this

* This account, which differs very much from that of our modern hiſtorians, is ſupported by ſeveral manuſcripts in the Cottonian library at the Britiſh muſeum, particularly by thoſe marked *Otho* D. 7. *Julius D.* 4. and is confirmed by the author of *Encomium Emmæ*, who lived in the very time when theſe tranſactions were performed.

purpoſe he forged a letter in the name of their mother, inviting them over. This artifice, being backed with ſeveral rich preſents, had its deſired effect, and Alfred came over at a day appointed, attended with a thouſand Normans. As ſoon as he came on ſhore, he was joined by Godwin, who received him with all the ſigns of a ſincere zeal and cordial affection. In the night Godwin ſurprized him in his bed, and, after having murdered about ſix hundred of his retinue, carried him with him towards London. When he came thither, the king ordered him to be bound and tranſported to Ely; on his going on ſhore he had his eyes put out, after which he was confined in the monaſtery, and expired ſoon after in the greateſt miſery and † torture.

Godwin, having thus diſpatched one of the princes, reflected that he had not waded far enough in blood for his own ſecurity. While the other ſon of Ethelred ſurvived, he thought himſelf and Harold in a critical ſituation;

† Speed aſſerts, from Caxton, that this prince owed his death to one of the moſt ſhocking acts of cruelty, that ever entered into the thoughts of mankind. According to him, his belly was ripped up, and his bowels drawn out, one end of which being faſtened to a poſt, he was pricked with ſharp needles, and poinards, to make him run round, till all his bowels were wound upon it: but the tranſlator of Rapin, from Brompton and Knighton, applies this only to ſeveral of the retinue, without mentioning the king himſelf.

ation; the mother of the deceaſed prince was both artful and ambitious, ſhe was very popular among the Engliſh, and might poſſibly ſeize an opportunity to revenge the death of one her ſons, and recover the rights of the ſurvivour. To prevent her therefore from undertaking any thing againſt the repoſe of the kingdom, ſhe was charged with an intention to diſturb it, and was ‡ ſent into exile, by way of ſecurity. In this diſtreſs, ſhe was embarraſſed for a place to retire to; Normandy, the place of Edward's reſidence, was then governed by a regent who was not much in her intereſt, and perhaps dared not eſpouſe it, for fear of offending Harold. She at laſt determined to retire to Flanders, and was there entertained with great hoſpitality by earl Baldwin, who aſſigned her Bruges for her reſidence.

Harold, having thus freed his kingdom from every competitor, reſolved to raiſe a numerous fleet, to prevent their return, and ſecure his coaſts from invaſions. For this purpoſe, he commanded every port to fit out ſixteen ſail of Gallies, and aſſeſſed the kingdom in order to maintain them at the rate of eight marks for every rower, and twelve more for every maſter.

§ This tax, which the Engliſh eſteemed

‡ A. D. 1037.
§ A. D. 1038.

a very heavy burthen, on account of its being deſigned to guard them from the attempts of Edward, whoſe deſigns they favoured, gave occaſion to great diſcontents. The Welch broke out into open rebellion, and, under the command of Griffith ap Lewellin, routed the Engliſh army. ‖ The victor, encouraged by his ſucceſs, marched to Lhanpadan vawr in Cardiganſhire, and waſted that place. Thence paſſing into South Wales, he reduced it entirely, and forced Howel ap Edwin, the king, to ſave himſelf by flight. This inſurrection was at laſt happily quelled, and Harold, in order to prevent future diſturbances in thoſe parts, enacted a law whereby every Welchman, who paſſed Offa's dyke without leave, was ſubjected to the loſs of his right hand.

Hardicnute perhaps awaked out of his lethargy, by the ſollicitations of the male-contents, or incited merely by the impulſes of natural affection, came from Denmark with a fleet of ſixty ſail to Flanders, under pretence of paying a * viſit to Emma, but very probably to attempt the recovery of his rights. The powerful fleet which Harold had fitted out might have induced him to decline his expediton for the preſent in expectation of a more favourable opportunity. The pre-

‖ From a manuſcript in the Cottonian Collection; and from Caradoc's chronicle.

A. D. 1039.

preparations which he had made, though not immediately employed, ſoon proved of eminent utility: for while he was engaged in viſiting his mother he received the joyful news of Harold's † death, together with an invitation to aſſume the crown in his ſtead.

From a retroſpect of Harold's reign, we may be partly enabled to form an idea of his character. The methods he made uſe of to pave his way to the throne, and the meaſures he took to eſtabliſh himſelf in it afterwards, are ſuch as authorize, our calling him, wilful, obſtinate, brutal and cruel. The clamour which was raiſed againſt him on account of the tax he impoſed on his ſubjects for the maintenance of his fleet was founded in a groſs ignorance of the intereſt of the nation. The dominion of the ſeas could not be maintained without a powerful navy, and the Engliſh ſhould have been inſtructed by their former misfortunes, that when this bulwark was neglected, they were expoſed to the attacks of every rapacious enemy, and laid open to inevitable ruin. He had one oddity, which was ſo remarkable that it occaſioned him to be ſtigmatized with a nickname: this was his prodigious fondneſs of walking, which he carried to ſo great exceſs, that he never would mount on horſeback, and ſo famous was he for the quickneſs of his pace that he was generally characterized by the

† A. D. 1040.

name of Harefoot. Though artful himſelf, he ſeems to have been over-reached by the ſuperiour ſubtelty of earl Godwin; who made him his dupe, and incited him to ſuch acts of barbarity as the indolence of his own nature would not have led him to, had it been left without bias. His private virtues are ſo little known, that any detail of them would be no better than ſurmize: as for his vices, they have been mentioned already. To ſum up his character in a few words; his virtues were no ways ſtriking, but his faults ſuch as attracted notice.

HARDICNUTE. A. D. 1040.

HArdicnute being at Bruges with a formidable fleet, at the time of Harold's death, the Engliſh were reſolved to anticipate any meaſures, he could take for the acquiſition of the crown, by inviting him over to take poſſeſſion of it. On his arrival he was received with the greateſt demonſtrations of joy, and even Godwin, who had been concerned with Harold, in diveſting him of his right, was remarkably forward in paying him homage. Yet however ſanguine the Engliſh were in their expectations, they were ſoon convinced that the idea which they had preconceived of Hardicnute's adminiſtration, was grounded on miſtake. The very firſt action after his coronation convinced them

them that he was a man of ſtrong paſſions, and terrible in his reſentments. It indeed might admit of a palliation, as it had the ſanction of filial duty, but at the ſame time it betrayed a littleneſs of mind unworthy a perſon in his exalted ſtation. In revenge for the injuries and affronts which his mother had ſuſtained from Harold, and at the ſame time to ſhew his deteſtation of the cruelties by which that monarch had put an end to his brother Alfred, he ordered Alfric archbiſhop of York, Godwin, Troud the executioner and others, to dig up the body of Harold, and after cutting off his head to throw his body into the Thames. This ſavage command was performed with the greateſt punctuality, but the body of the king, being taken up by ſome fiſhermen, was conveyed to London, and privately interred in St. Clements church-yard, which was at that time a place appropriated to the burial of the Danes.

After this act of pious ſavageneſs, he laid a tax on the nation for the ſupport of ſixty gallies, at the rate of eight marks for each rower. As the nation was this year threatened with a famine, the exaction of this tribute was the occaſion of no ſmall diſcontent and murmuring.

Yet not ſatisfied with this grievous exaction, he levied a far greater the enſuing year, conſiſting of two different impoſitions,

one

one of which amounted to no leſs than twenty-nine thouſand twenty-nine pounds, and the other eleven thouſand forty-eight pounds, which was applied to the ſupport of a fleet of thirty-two ſail, then fitted out without any apparent neceſſity or reaſon. This oppreſſion was the more grievous to the Engliſh on account of the ſcarcity of the ſeaſon, and the former impoſition, with which he had fleeced them. Unable to ſupport ſuch a grievous burthen, they grew deſperate, and at Worceſter, Feadar and Torſtan, two of the king's collectors, loſt their lives in a riot. * This outrage very much incenſed Hardicnute, who was determined to revenge it with the greateſt rigour; for which purpoſe he ſent a body of forces into the country, with expreſs orders to lay it waſte with fire and ſword. Severe orders; but too punctually executed! The inhabitants abandoned the city on the approach of the king's forces, which was immediately plundered and burnt to the ground. A little iſland in the Severne ſerved theſe brave men for a place of retreat, which was fortified and defended with ſo much bravery, that their enemies finding all their attempts fruitleſs, left them in the poſſeſſion of their aſylum, and at liberty to return to their deſolated city when they pleaſed.

Hardic-

* A. D. 1041.

Hardicnute might be juſtly blamed for this violation of humanity, and give grounds to ſuſpect that he was a ſtranger to the ſocial and benevolent affections, did not the heights to which he carried filial piety and fraternal duty, in ſome meaſure, exculpate his character from this charge. His brother Edward was at this period invited over, and treated by him with the greateſt hoſpitality. And his ſiſter Gunhilda, who was betrothed to the emperor of Germany, was ſent about the ſame time to conſummate her nuptials, with ſo much magnificence, that it was mentioned as remarkable even in the days of Matthew of Weſtminſter.

The intereſt of Godwin was now grown ſo exorbitant, that it raiſed the envy of the nobility, and the dread of Alfric, archbiſhop of York. In order to prevent his ſoaring higher, the prelate undertook to ruin him in the opinion of his maſter; for which purpoſe, he charged him, and Living, biſhop of Worceſter, of being deeply concerned in the murder of Alfred the king's brother.

The king had already ſhown how eaſy it was to incenſe him againſt any perſon guilty of this crime, and entered ſo eaſily into the meaſures of the archbiſhop, that he immediately deprived Living of his ſee, and gave it, as a reward, to his accuſer; but ſo great was his avarice, that he ſoon after reſtored him to it, on receiving a large ſum of

of money. Godwin, being informed of his danger, had recourſe likewiſe to the ſame expedient for his ſecurity; and preſented the king with a ſumptuous galley curiouſly carved and gilt: it was manned with eighty ſoldiers caſed in rich armour, whoſe helmets, corſlets, and hilts of their ſwords were gilt: they had each a Daniſh battle-axe, adorned with ſilver and gold, ſuſpended from the left ſhoulder, held a ſhield with a gilded boſs and nails in their left hands, and in their right a Saxon launce; beſides which, they had a golden bracelet weighing ſixteen ounces on each arm. This preſent ſo powerfully operated on the king's avarice, that he forgot his reſentment, and condeſcended to let Godwin purge himſelf of his crime by taking an oath, that he was no farther concerned in the murder of Alfred, than he was obliged by duty to Harold.

After theſe tranſactions, Hardicnute did not wear the crown long; but * died ſuddenly at a wedding, ſolemnized between Torey Prudan a Daniſh nobleman, and Githa the daughter of Oſgood Clappa, at Lambeth.

The

* From the manuſcript of J. Rouſe it appears, that this king's cataſtrophe was rather a ſubject of mirth than regret to the Engliſh, who celebrated the anniverſary of his death, for ſome time, as a holiday, named *Hock* Wedneſday, in dancing, and drawing cords acroſs the way, to ſtop perſons 'till they purchaſed their paſſage with money.

The character of this prince appears very amiable when we conſider his piety towards his mother, and his affection towards his brother, but, in other reſpects, deſerves cenſure more than praiſe. He was certainly of a diſpoſition naturally indolent, or elſe he would have vindicated his right to the Engliſh crown, during the life of Harold. Not but we muſt ſuſpect him of want of courage which might be another motive for his inactivity: his ſavage cruelty to the corps of Harold, and the citizens of Worceſter, manifeſt a brutal diſpoſition, which confirms the imputation of his cowardice. The grievous burthens he impoſed on his ſubjects, ſhow him to have acted rather like an enemy than a king. His palace was one continued ſcene of gluttony and ebriety, and his tables were loaded with no leſs than four meals every day. Huntingdon, contrary to the ſtream of all other hiſtorians, alleges the laſt inſtance, as a ſign of his magnificence and generoſity, though it is rather an indication of his extravagance, and brutal exceſs. The manner in which he died, joined to his former character of gluttonous intemperance, makes it ſtrongly ſuſpected that he killed himſelf with immoderate eating.† His virtues

† Huntingdon rather imputes it to immoderate drinking; and, introducing him as being elevated with mirth and cheartulneſs, adds, that as he was *drinking*, ſtanding,

tues were not without alloy; his vices were ſuch as deprived him of every manly excellence, and degraded him among the brutes.

EDWARD *the Confeſſor.* A. D. 1042.

THE Engliſh had ſuffered ſo much from the Danes during the reigns of their late kings, that they no ſooner heard of the death of Hardicnute, than they took meaſures to avenge themſelves for the injuries they had ſuſtained. They roſe in ſeveral places, intending either to maſſacre theſe foreigners, or elſe to drive them out of the kingdom. In this period of diſtreſs, Edward, the ſon of Ethelred, and Emma his mother, were plunged in the greateſt perplexity; and the prince was ſo much terrified with the tumultuous proceedings of the Engliſh, that he entered into a reſolution to retire to Normandy for ſafety, and applied himſelf to earl Godwin for ſafe-conduct to that kingdom. Godwin was at that time the moſt powerful perſon in England, and acted as a kind of regent during the vacancy of the crown; he was himſelf inveſted

ing, he fell down ſuddenly, and died without ſpeaking a word: the original runs thus, "Rex Hardeknutus dum in convivio nuptiarum apud Lambheth, juxta Londinium, lætus et ſoſpes ſtando biberet, repente corruens, & ſic obmuteſcens expiravit." See *Higden's Polychron.* p. 277. Gales' edit.

ed with the dignity of Duke of Weſſex, earl of Kent, and high treaſurer; Swein, his eldeſt ſon, was earl of Hereford, Glouceſter, Oxford, Berks, and Suſſex, and Harold, another of his ſons, was earl of Eſſex and the kingdom of the Eaſt-angles; ſo that Godwin might properly be ſaid to be at that time maſter of one half of the kingdom, and more than a match for any party, that could be raiſed in oppoſition to him.

* As ſoon as this nobleman had heard Edward's propoſal, he treated him with ſuch

* This account, which varies from that given us by modern hiſtories, is ſupported by a manuſcript in the Cottonian collection marked, *Otho.* D. 7. and confirmed by another likewiſe at the Britiſh Muſeum marked *Domitian*, A. 13. As the manner in which it relates this event, is more minute than any other extant, it is imagined that the reader will not think the following extract and tranſlation unworthy of his notice. "The king being dead, the care of the kingdom, with conſent of the nobles, was committed to earl Godwin, until a proper perſon ſhould be elected king. Edward, the ſon of Emma, was at this time plunged in the deepeſt diſtreſs, three dukes of Normandy, his relations, being dead, and William, the ſon of Robert, being at that time abſent from his kingdom. Having no hopes of meeting either with commiſeration or aſſiſtance from his mother, in his deſpair he left Normandy, and ſailed for England, and having landed at Southampton went immediately to London to Godwin, a man ſuppoſed to be no friend to him, and generally accounted the murderer of his brother. Having found acceſs one morning, very early, into the earl's bedchamber, he proſtrated himſelf on the ground before Godwin,

marks of tenderneſs, as removed his fears; and endeavoured likewiſe to divert him from his deſign. For this purpoſe, he repreſented his intention of quitting the kingdom, as unworthy of a perſon of his birth; he put him in mind, that he was deſcended from a king and a queen, and being now arrived at a mature age, did not doubt but the mildneſs of his natural diſpoſition would be a means of effacing all the injuries the nation had received from a race of foreigners; and that, at all events, it was infinitely more glorious for him to live a king in his own country, than to wander about abroad in the diſtreſſful ſtate and abject character of an exile.

Edward, conſcious of the power of Godwin, and animated by his diſcourſes with ſome degree of ambition, reſigned himſelf entirely to his direction, and left him to concert ſuch meaſures as he thought effectual

win, with his arms ſtretched out in the form of a croſs, juſt as he was waking. Godwin ſeeing him in this attitude, ſays to him, "*Who, and what wretch art thou, and what is your buſineſs? Stand up, that I may ſee who you are.*" Edward immediately replied, that he was a poor ſervant of his, that he had been without any default obliged to paſs his days in exile, and begging him to ſave his life, burſt into tears. Godwin, melted with his diſtreſs, promiſed him his protection; and deſiring him once more to riſe, requeſted to be informed who he was. On this Edward diſcovered himſelf, and the earl having made him promiſe, on oath, that he would marry his daughter, and continue him in his poſt, kiſſed him, and bid him go before him incognito to Wincheſter."

tual to raiſe him to the throne of his anceſtors. The only terms that Godwin ſtipulated for his ſervices, were, that Edward ſhould marry his daughter, and maintain the earl and his ſons in the poſts they enjoyed. Theſe conditions were far from being hard, conſidering Edward's circumſtances; the match particularly could not be reaſonably refuſed, when Edward conſidered the birth of the lady, together with her beauty and extraordinary abilities. Ingulph hath given us a noble teſtimony of her affability and learning, from his perſonal knowledge; informing us, that ſhe often met him in his way to ſchool, on which occaſions ſhe would ſtop him with the greateſt ſigns of tenderneſs, diſcourſe with him on ſome branch of grammar, diſpute with him, before ſhe left him, in logic, with no little ſubtilty, and ſtrength of argument, and make him an handſome preſent at her departure.

The nobles having aſſembled at Gillingham for the election of a king, Godwin remembered his promiſe to Edward, and took him along with him, incog, to the meeting. After a long harangue, in which the earl diſplayed the neceſſity of confining their choice to this prince, to the ſurprize of all preſent, he raiſed him in the midſt of the aſſembly, ſaying, at the ſame time, "Behold your king." The aſſembly being ſtaggered at ſo unexpected an event, after a

ſhort pauſe, agreed to elect Edward for their ſovereign, and Godwin, to give a ſanction to their choice, was the firſt perſon who did him homage.

† On account of a great ſcarcity, and a prodigious mortality of cattle, the ceremony of coronation was deferred for that year; and the next Edward was inaugurated with great ſolemnity at Wincheſter. On this occaſion, a coronation ſermon was preached by archbiſhop Eadſig, which is by ſome of our hiſtorians repreſented as the firſt that was pronounced on ſuch an occaſion; but the reader, by recurring to the beginning of the reign of Ethelred II. may perceive that this is a miſtake.

The firſt public act of this canonized monarch, was an act of undutifulneſs; he thought himſelf uſed ill by his mother ‡ Emma,

† A. D. 1043.

‡ The annals of Wincheſter, Rudborn, and Hoveden, inform us, that this queen was ſuſpected of too much familiarity with Alwin, biſhop of Worceſter, and that both of them were likewiſe charged by Godwin, or Robert the Norman, as being concerned in the murder of Alfred, beſides having entered into a plot to take off Edward by poiſon. Emma, obliged to prove her innocence by undergoing the fiery ordeal, walked over nine red hot ploughſhares, without receiving any hurt; in conſideration of which ſhe is ſaid to have given nine manors to the church of Wincheſter, and to have been afterwards reſtored to the king's favour. Dr. Campbel judiciouſly explodes this ſtory, as mere fiction in the Biographia Britannica, p. 2224; and if it be recollected that neither the

ma, during his exile in Normandy, and deprived of his right of ſucceſſion by her ſecond marriage: in reſentment for which he ſeized on all her eſtates, together with all the treaſures ſhe had amaſſed. In order to exculpate him from the guilt of this action, the norman hiſtorians have pretended, that he was moved to it by the inſtigation of Syward, Godwin, and Leofric, three noblemen of great intereſt: but as neither the manuſcripts in the Muſeum, Eadmer, nor the Saxon annals mention this circumſtance, it ſeems to have been invented by the Norman party after the conqueſt, merely to render the race of Godwin odious.

Whilſt Edward was thus employed in revenging pretended injuries; he was alarmed with an account that Magnus, king of Norway, was making great preparations to invade his dominions. By the care of earl Godwin the kingdom was immediately put into a poſture of defence, and the king himſelf went on board a fleet of five and thirty ſhips at Sandwich, intending to give the Norwegian monarch battle, and prevent his landing. But Swein, king of Denmark,

the Saxon annals, Eadmer, nor William of Malmeſbury have mentioned this circumſtance, we muſt conclude that the writers of the annals never heard of it, and that the two latter authors rejected it as wanting credit.

attacking Norway about this time, cauſed a diverſion.*

After the failure of this enterprize, Edward ſolemnized his marriage with Edgitha, earl Godwin's daughter, which had been deferred 'till this time for reaſons, which have not yet been aſcertained.

The Daniſh intereſt was ſo low at this time, that moſt of that nation were either maſſacred or exiled; ſo great indeed was the animoſity which the Engliſh bore to any of the name, that even the virtues † of Gunhilda pleaded ineffectually in her behalf, and ſhe was obliged to depart the kingdom with her two ſons.

‡ The great intereſt of Godwin, who managed all the affairs of the nation according to his own will, had ſuch an effect on one of his ſons, named Swein, that it made him think, he might attempt any thing without being called to account, or expoſed to puniſhment. From this perſuaſion, he attempted the chaſtity of an abbeſs, but his crime being known, and Godwin being either too politic or too remiſs to endeavour to ſcreen him, he was obliged to retire as an exile into Flanders.

Notwith-

* Ailred aſcribes the failure of Magnus's expedition to the extraordinary piety of Edward, which engaged a particular interpoſition of providence on his behalf; Magnus being drowned by a falſe ſtep he made as he was going on board.

† A. D. 1044. ‡ A. D. 1045.

Notwithſtanding Denmark was at this time invaded by the king of Norway, and unable to withſtand his forces, the Danes fitted out a fleet of five and twenty ſail, to ravage the coaſts of England. They landed at Sandwich under the command of Lothen and Yrlin, and having amaſſed a conſiderable booty, retired with it to their ſhips. From hence they ſailed about Thanet, and made a fruitleſs attempt on thoſe parts, being beaten off by the inhabitants, and prevented from making a deſcent. After this check they directed their courſe towards Eſſex, where they met with better ſucceſs, and, having embarked a very large booty on board their fleet, ſet ſail for Flanders, in order to diſpoſe of it.

Swein, unable to reſiſt the victorious arms of the Norwegians, was driven out of his kingdom, and applied about this time to Edward, who, by Godwin's advice, intended to have aſſiſted him with a fleet of fifty ſail; but this meaſure being warmly oppoſed in council by Leofric and Siward, nothing was undertaken; though Swein, thus left to himſelf, ſoon after recovered his kingdom by the death of Magnus.

The Danes, being now at leiſure to continue their depredations, infeſted the Welch coaſt in ſuch a manner that the inhabitants were obliged to deſert their habitations and retire into the inland parts for ſecurity.

Edward

Edward, being informed of their ravages, fitted out a conſiderable fleet, and ſailed to Sandwich in order to protect his coaſts: Swein, the exiled ſon of Godwin, had about this time equipped eight veſſels, with an intention to avenge himſelf, for his ſufferings, on his country.* He had made ſeveral deſcents on the coaſts, and enriched himſelf with ſeveral captures by ſea: but, hearing that Edward himſelf was at the head of a ſtrong ſquadron, thought the beſt method of ſecuring himſelf would be to make his ſubmiſſion. For this purpoſe he applied to Edward, and had prevailed on him to reſtore him to his favour, and reinſtate him in his former poſſeſſions and honours: but Harold and Beorn, his brothers, diſſuading the king from ratifying the treaty, by repreſenting Swein as unworthy of his favours; the king revoked his promiſe, and Swein was obliged to quit the kingdom within four days.

While the king was thus employed, he was alarmed with the news, that the Danes had made a deſcent on the coaſt of the Eaſt-angles, and were laying the whole country under contributions. Earl Godwin was immediately diſpatched with his two ſons, Harold and Toſgoit, who commanded two of the king's ſhips, together with a fleet of two and forty ſail, to fight the enemy. But,

a

* A. D. 1046.

a ſtorm ariſing, Harold and the king's ſhips were firſt driven into Penſey, and afterwards detained there by contrary winds. While Godwin and his ſons were wind-bound in this place, Swein came to them, and, in a conference with his father and earl Beorn, perſuaded them to mediate for him with the king, and accompany him to Sandwich, where Edward then lay with his fleet. As they were in their way towards the king, Swein perſuaded Beorn to return with him towards his ſhips, pretending he was apprehenſive his men would mutiny in his abſence. The earl complying with his requeſt, accompanied him to his fleet, and refuſing to go on board, though ſtrongly importuned by Swein, was bound hand and foot by the ſailors, and carried in that manner into the ſhip. Swein having thus got him into his poſſeſſion, hoiſted ſail for Axmouth, and there murthered him. After which he ſailed for Flanders, and was entertained at Bruges a whole year, by earl Baldwin.

* While he was in this retreat, his father and Aldred, biſhop of London, uſed their intereſt with the king, who conſented to grant him his pardon, on which he returned again to England. Previous to this ſtep, a great council had been held at Worceſter, wherein the ſtate of the kingdom was

* A. D. 1047.

was taken into conſideration, and, in order to defend the coaſt from the invaſion of foreign enemies, a ſquadron of nine ſhips were equipped; four of which cruiſed in the channel, and the other five remained in the harbour to provide againſt unforeſeen accidents.

* Edward, being thus ſettled in his throne, could not help ſhewing the fondneſs he had contracted for the Norman cuſtoms during his exile; he invited over ſeveral of that nation, who had been kind to him in his diſtreſs, and behaved towards theſe foreigners with a partiality that gave great diſguſt to the Engliſh nobility. The language of the Normans grew ſo faſhionable, that it was ſpoken by every one at court, and the men of buſineſs began to put their law deeds into the ſame form as thoſe of Normandy. This voluntary affectation which was practiſed in order to curry favour with the young monarch, though it was diſagreeable to ſome, was not looked on as an object of public clamour by any. But Edward carried his partiality to foreigners to a height, which was both impolitic and unjuſt. The moſt important fortreſſes, and the greateſt poſts in his kingdom were conferred on the Normans: and the ſee of Canterbury, being vacant, was filled by one Rodbert a monk of Jumieges, who had firſt been elected biſhop of London. This prelate was a perſon of great cunning, and

* A. D. 1048.

and maſter of every art, which could render him inſinuating and agreeable. He ſoon poſſeſſed Edward with a high opinion of his capacity and integrity, and engroſſed his confidence. Godwin, finding the ear of the king poſſeſſed by a foreigner, was apprehenſive that his maſter might be lead to ſuch meaſures as were inconſiſtent with the good of the kingdom, and the natural right, which the Engliſh had to his favour. He endeavoured, but in vain, to remove the prelate from the place he held in the king's eſtem, and by trumpeting abroad the partiality ſhown to foreigners, leſſened his intereſt and rendered him unpopular. Rodbert was not behind-hand with the earl, where he knew his intereſt moſt efficacious; he repreſented the power of Godwin's family as exorbitant and dangerous to the king, expatiated upon the inſolence with which he behaved in his adminiſtration, and infuſed ſuch a jealouſy in the king's boſom, that he entirely deprived him of his confidence, and convinced Edward that he was unworthy of his favours. Godwin ſoon perceived that his intereſt with the king was declining, and was not at a loſs to gueſs at the cauſe; he made loud remonſtrances againſt the king's favourite, complained that his meaſures were miſrepreſented, and that, by the aſcendancy which a Norman had in his favour, the

good

good of the nation was in danger of being ſacrificed to ſome foreign intereſt.

† At this period an accident happened which inflamed the mutual hatred of the two parties ſo highly, that it threatened not only ruin to themſelves, but likewiſe deſtruction to the kingdom.

Euſtace, earl of Buloigne, who had married Goda the king's ſiſter, came on a viſit to England; and having been received with great hoſpitality by his brother-in-law, ſet out for Dover on his return to his dominions. In his paſſage from Canterbury to Dover, he diſpatched ſome of his retinue before him, in order to provide him with lodgings in the laſt mentioned place; but as they behaved very rudely to the inhabitants, in taking up their quarters, wherever they pleaſed, without conſent; one of them was reſolved to oppoſe their entrance into his houſe, and reſiſt force with force; in the ſcuffle the maſter of the houſe was wounded, which being perceived by one of the townſmen, he ſet upon the aggreſſor and killed him. This being reported to Euſtace, he was ſo exaſperated at the death of his domeſtics, that he and his attendants immediately put on their breaſt plates, and determined to puniſh the inhabitants for this inſolence. The man's houſe who had been the cauſe of this diſturbance was

† The Saxon annals place this event in A. D. 1048, but other authors in A. D. 1051.

was broke open, and he himſelf fell a ſacrifice to the fury of the earl. As the earl's anger did not ſtop here, but was vented againſt others, who were no ways concerned in the affront he had received, it gave occaſion to a general tumult, in which twenty of the inhabitants loſt their lives, nineteen of the earl's followers were killed and ſeveral others were wounded. With the few attendants that were left, Euſtace poſted away to the king, repreſenting the affront, which he had received, in the moſt partial manner, aggravating the inſolence of the townſmen, but concealing the injurious behaviour of his own attendants. The king, being greatly incenſed by the partial repreſentation of Euſtace, ordered Godwin, in whoſe dominions the inſult had been committed, to march with a body of troops againſt the offenders, and to lay waſte their country with fire and ſword.

Inſtead of obeying the king, Godwin took the liberty to remonſtrate to him, that ſuch a method of proceeding would be highly injurious to his character, and the ſafety of his ſubjects. At the ſame time he hinted, that it would be agreeable to juſtice to cite the governours of the caſtle, who ſeemed to be leading men in the riot, to make their public appearance in the king's court, that they might have an opportunity of clearing themſelves if accuſed wrongfully,

or else, if convicted, be obliged to make satisfaction with their lives and estates: and concluded, it would be unjust either in him or the king to condemn them unheard, or to punish them when they were under obligations to protect and defend them.

This bold answer was a language which Edward had not been used to; his Norman sycophants had been so complaisant in their addresses, that the king could not help thinking it somewhat audacious, and wanting in the respect due to majesty. But Godwin was not less brave in his actions than his speeches, he delayed going, though ordered to set out immediately, and chose rather to subject himself to danger, than deprive the innocent of their lives, or sacrifice the liberty of his countrymen to the pert insolence of foreigners. 'Tis said indeed that he formed a glorious scheme at this juncture, which bid fair for ridding the kingdom of the Normans; who intercepted all the rays of regal favours, and basked in the splendours, which were caused by the munificence and revenues of the English.

The Welch, taking the advantages of these disturbances, had built a fortress within the limits of Swein's government, and had done great damages to the English in that neighbourhood. The king, being informed of this transaction, summoned his nobility to Gloucester, in order to take the mat-

matter into their conſideration. The Welch, being apprized of this meaſure, got the ſtart of Godwin and his ſons, and in a conference which they had with Edward, repreſented them as the aggreſſors.

The king had ſhown, in the affair of Euſtace, that he was ſuſceptible to the firſt impreſſions, and that he took his meaſures without giving himſelf the trouble to hear both parties. He did ſo in this affair likewiſe, and meditated nothing leſs than deſtruction to Godwin and his family. In order however to ſtrengthen his party, and to ſecure himſelf from the effects of Godwin's reſentment; he engaged Leofric and Siward in his intereſt. After theſe precautions were taken, Godwin and his ſons were ſummoned to appear at the council. The earl and his ſons had at that time aſſembled a conſiderable army, and were at the point of attacking the Welch, when the king's ſummons reached them. He eaſily perceived that this was an artifice of the Welch, and that the king intended nothing leſs by his meſſage, than to get him into his power, and to betray him. Notwithſtanding he ſtill continued firm, and reſolved not to obey the ſummons, though he was certain that his diſobedience would involve him in troubles. He was not to be told, that his contempt would exaſperate the king to violent meaſures, but conſidering that the eaſineſs

of his nature made him the dupe of his enemies, he bore him the reſpect due to a king, though he could not approve of the meaſures of the adminiſtration. From this motive, he gave poſitive orders to his army not to act offenſively, but to repel force by force when they were attacked.

Edward, burning with eagerneſs to chaſtize the earl's contumacy, commanded forces to be raiſed all over his dominions: and the nation was now on the point of being plunged in a civil war, had not more moderate councils reſcued it from the impending danger. Some of the nobility who attended the king, prevailed on him to decline coming to extremities, and to refer the affair to a general council. Edward, who was no ways fond of martial enterprizes, eaſily liſtened to an expedient, which coincided with his natural diſpoſition, and ſummoned a great council to meet at London. In this aſſembly earl Swein was declared an out-law, and the earls Godwin and Harold were cited to appear, and give an account of their conduct. The two earls declared that they were ready to make their appearance in court, provided they had hoſtages given them for their ſecurity. This requeſt, however juſt, was refuſed in a peremptory manner, and the king iſſued orders to the earl's ſervants to deliver up their maſter. But as his commands had no effect on Godwin's adherents;

the

the king iſſued out a ſecond citation, requiring him to make his appearance, attended only by twelve of his followers. Godwin ſtill inſiſting on hoſtages, as a previous condition to his compliance, was poſitively refuſed again, and ordered to quit the kingdom, though he had offered, in caſe of a proper ſecurity, to make his appearance in public court, and clear himſelf from any charge that could be brought againſt him. After the order for the earl's exile was diffuſed amongſt his party, his army deſerted, and he found himſelf under a neceſſity of complying with his ſentence. Having ſhipped all his treaſure on board a ſmall ſquadron at Boſenham in Suſſex, he ſailed in company with his ſon Swein to Flanders, where he was kindly received by earl Baldwin, who was related to him by the marriage of his daughter to Toſti one of Godwin's ſons. Harold retired into Ireland, and was protected by the king.

That Edward was incited to theſe meaſures rather by the inſtigations of Godwin's enemies, than a regard to juſtice, is manifeſt from his behaviour to his wife, when her father and brother were baniſhed the kingdom. Thus left deſtitute of friends, and abandoned to grief for the diſtreſſes of her family, one would have imagined, that ſhe might have found all her loſſes compenſated in the endearments of her huſband.

But Edward, though canonized for a ſaint, was a ſtranger to the tender relentings of humanity; and inſtead of ſoothing her pains and mitigating her ſorrows, ſtripped her of every thing valuable, and confined her, together with Emma his mother, to the monaſtery of Werewell. The reaſon* he aſſigned for this act of brutality, was ſuch as muſt ſhock the ear of the tender huſband, and raiſe the greateſt deteſtation in the boſom of the humane. Yet it came from a king celebrated for his meekneſs, and canonized for a ſaint. In order to deprive Godwin and his family of any hopes of recovering their eſtates, and to attach a ſtrong party to himſelf, in caſe they had recourſe to hoſtilities, Edward enriched Odda with the ſpoils of Swein's dominions, and conferred thoſe of Harold on Elſgar the ſon of earl Leofric.†

The

* According to Malmeſbury, it was this; "He was reſolved that ſhe alone ſhould not enjoy peace and plenty, when her father, and the reſt of her family, were plunged into difficulties, and abandoned to diſtreſs."

† This earl founded a very ſtately monaſtery in Warwickſhire, which was ſo flouriſhing that it gave the name of Coventry to the town in which it was built. His lady Godiva was remarkable for her beauty and piety, beyond any of her time, and bare ſo great an affection for Coventry, that ſhe inceſſantly importuned her huſband to exempt it from ſeveral grievous taxes and impoſitions. At laſt the earl conſented to her requeſt, on condition ſhe would

The Iriſh taking advantage of the unſettled ſtate of the kingdom, entered the mouth of the Severn with a ſquadron conſiſting of thirty-ſix ſail, and being joined by Griffin, prince of South-wales, committed great outrages in thoſe parts. ‡ After which, having paſſed the river Wye, they burnt the city of Dunedham, and put all the inhabitants to the ſword. Aldred, biſhop of Worceſter, alarmed at their exceſſes, being joined by a handful of men from Glouceſter and Herefordſhire, marched againſt them, in order to reſtrain their inroads; but Griffin, hearing of his motions, ſtole a march of him in the night, and attacking him very early the next morning, obtained a complete victory, and put the remainder of his army to flight.

The

would ride naked through the town. Whether the earl ſpoke in earneſt, or in jeſt, is a circumſtance not agreed upon by the authours who have mentioned it; but they are unanimous, in aſſerting that ſhe undertook to perform the terms; and having firſt forbid the inhabitants to look at her, during her proceſſion, on pain of death, mounted her horſe, and rode through the town, with no other covering, but her hair, which was remarkably long, and, as Brompton expreſſes it, covered her like a mantle. One perſon is reported to have been ſo curious as to peep at her, but was immediately killed with lightening: and, in memory of this event, the citizens ſtill exhibit a ſtatue on the very ſpot, in the attitude of a perſon peeping out of a window

‡ A. D. 1049.

The Engliſh had long groaned under the tax known by the name of Danegelt, which however neceſſary at firſt, was continued by ſucceeding adminiſtrations even after the Danes were expelled the iſland. It was Edward's intereſt to take away every pretext which might be uſed by Godwin's ſecret friends to inflame the nation; this tax he knew always occaſioned great murmurings, and in order to attach his ſubjects more ſtrongly to his perſon, took this opportunity to § aboliſh it. Edward not content with this act of royal kindneſs, went ſtill farther, and diſtributed all the ſurplus that remained in his treaſury among the original owners.

‡ While Edward was thus endearing himſelf to his ſubjects, William, duke of Normandy,

§ Florence of Worceſter places this event in A. D. 1051. but Mariana, according to Higden's polychron. in A. D. 1050. The occaſion of this popular conceſſion, as related by Ingulph, is too romantic to deſerve credit, but is produced in order to make the reader ſmile; "According to our author, Edward going into the treaſury where this tax had been depoſited, ſaw the Devil dancing and running upon the bags of money, though, by the bye, no one could ſee the fiend but himſelf; this ſight had ſuch an effect on the Monarch, that he ordered all the money to be reſtored to the right owners, and forbid its being levied for the future."

‡ Brompton places this event in A. D. 1050. Florence, Ingulph, and Simeon of Durham in A. D. 1051. But they

mandy, his couſin, came with a great retinue to pay him a viſit. The civilities that Edward had received during his exile in the duke's dominions, were returned with the greateſt marks of gratitude; and the duke, after having received ſeveral noble preſents, returned well ſatisfied to Normandy. * Not long after the duke's departure, Emma, the king's mother, as Dr. Campbel conjectures, died of grief, occaſioned by the rigour with which Edward had treated her, and his wife Edgitha. Godwin, and his ſons, were far from being idle during their exile; they had, by this time, equipped a formidable fleet, and were determined to wipe

they all agree, that it was during the exile of earl Godwin, as appears from Higden's polychron. p. 379. It is therefore ſomewhat unaccountable that Dr. Smollet, who could have availed himſelf of theſe authorities, ſhould be ſo cloſe an imitator of Rapin as to refer this tranſaction to the year 1053. We may obſerve, that the moſt authentic authours mention nothing of Edward's promiſing the ſucceſſion to William during his ſtay: and the circumſtances of the times ſhow that it is highly improbable he ſhould. The Normans ſeem to be convinced of this, in ſhifting the pretended right of William, to a will made by Edward, in which he made him his ſucceſſor; but even this is a pretenſe as groundleſs as the former, ſince no ſuch will was ever produced. On the whole, we muſt conclude, that William had no other right to the ſucceſſion but that of a conqueror; and it will appear that he ſhowed it himſelf, by his conduct, when we come to his reign.

* A. D. 1052.

wipe off their diſgrace by ſome blow, which might oblige the king to reſtore them to their former honours. Edward being apprized of their intentions, ordered a fleet to aſſemble at Sandwich, under the command of the earls Roffe and Odda, in order to prevent them from making a deſcent. While the earls lay at Sandwich, Godwin came with his ſquadron, from Flanders, to a point of land near Rumney in Kent, and the earls having notice of his arrival, ſailed in purſuit of him. Godwin having received early intelligence of their motions retired to Penſey in Suſſex, and taking the advantage of a ſtorm, which happened at that time, to conceal his courſe, got ſafe to Flanders. The eſcape of the earl occaſioned a change of commanders in the fleet, and gave riſe to ſuch miſunderſtandings, that the ſailors deſerted, and the ſhips were laid up.

Godwin having notice of this, put to ſea again, and having landed his men at the Iſle of Wight, laid the whole iſland under contributions. From hence, ſailing to Portland, he made a ſecond deſcent, and did conſiderable damage to the inhabitants. Harold having put to ſea during this interval with nine ſail from Ireland, diſembarked his men at Portlock-bay in Somerſetſhire, and notwithſtanding a conſiderable body of men was collected together to oppoſe him, ſupplied himſelf with proviſions, plundered the

the coaſt, and returned to his fleet. Harold then directing his courſe eaſtward, joined his father's ſquadron at the Iſle of Wight. Their fleets being thus united, they ſailed along the coaſt of Suſſex, and ſeized upon all the ſhips, they found in the harbours. From hence they ſteered their courſe towards the cinque ports, and receiving a conſiderable reinforcement of ſhips and men, came to the Buoy at the Nore, and went up the Thames towards London. The king, having aſſembled all his nobility, waited for them with a ſtrong fleet conſiſting of fifty ſail, and a numerous army, intending to give them a warm reception. Godwin, ſeeing the king ſo well prepared, laid aſide all views of violence, and ſent a ſubmiſſive meſſage in conjunction with his ſons, begging to be reſtored to the honours and eſtates, of which they had been unjuſtly deprived. Edward, refuſing to hearken to any terms of accommodation, exaſperated Godwin's partly to ſuch a degree, that the earl found it very difficult to reſtrain them from proceeding to acts of hoſtility.

As the army on both ſides conſiſted entirely of Engliſh, who were unwilling to embrue their hands in the blood of their countrymen, and moſt of the chief men of London had been privately tampered with, Stigand the archbiſhop, aſſiſted by other perſonages of more moderate principles, took this oppor-

opportunity to procure a reconciliation between the king and Godwin; and a negotiation being entered into for that purpose, hostages were given on both sides, and a peace concluded. Robert the archbishop no sooner had heard of the conclusion of this treaty, than he withdrew from the kingdom, in company with Ulf and the rest of the Norman party. But in their way they were guilty of several outrages, which contributed in some measure to vindicate Godwin's clamours against their countrymen, and to wipe off all aspersions that they had thrown on his character.

* A great council being convened soon after, Godwin and his † sons, after a full hearing

* From the French manuscript chronicles in the Cottonian collection.

† Swein, about this time, went barefoot to Jerusalem, to expiate the crime he had been guilty of in the murder of Beorn, and died of a cold, or was assassinated in his return. Smollet represents him as the most profligate libertine of his age, which appears a little too severe. With respect to his affair with the abbess, it will admit of many alleviations; he was ready to make her satisfaction for his violence, loved her tenderly, and would have married her had not the king forbid it. With respect to the murder of Beorn, we must not, we will not palliate it in the least; his remorse on this account, appears however worthy of our notice, in the painful pilgrimage he undertook to expiate his guilt; and if candour will admit it as an argument of the sincerity of his repentance; he seems by no means to deserve the character of "*the most profligate libertine of his age.*"

hearing, were acquitted of every crime laid to their charge, reinſtated in all their honours and preferments, and reſtored to the king's favour. The queen was ſent for to court, and had reſtitution made of every thing, which had been taken from her. Robert archbiſhop of Canterbury, and all the Normans were declared out-laws and exiles, as being the chief incendiaries of the late troubles, and Stigand was promoted to the ſee of Canterbury.

The tranquillity of England being reſtored by this reconciliation, Godwin's popularity and power received new acceſſions every day. Being a firm friend to the Engliſh, he made it his chief ſtudy to prevent a foreign intereſt from getting the aſcendant to their prejudice; and knowing too well the king's partiality to the Normans, found means to get every one of that nation expelled from his court and his confidence. Theſe meaſures, though calculated for the good of the kingdom, have been aſperſed by writers after the Norman conqueſt, as imperious and tyranical; but modern readers may plainly perceive that they were the expedients of flatterers, who were reſolved to pay their court to William at the expence of truth.

‡ Godwin however did not long enjoy the

‡ A. D. 1053. The manner of this earl's death is variouſly reported. The Saxon annals mention only the day

fruits of his labours, but being ſtruck with an apoplexy, as he ſat at table with the king, died within three days afterwards.

The

day when it happened, and the place where he was buried, being entirely ſilent with reſpect to the cauſe. The chronicle of Durham aſſerts, that as Godwin was ſetting at table with the king at Wincheſter, he was ſuddenly ſtruck with ſo violent a diſeaſe, that he fell from his ſeat, and being taken up by his three ſons, Harold, Toſti, and Gyrth, was carried into the king's apartment, but, growing worſe and worſe, died on the fifth day afterwards. But according to the abbot of Beverley, his death happened in the following mannner: as Godwin was ſitting at table with the king, the cup-bearer in his hurry made a trip with one foot, but recovered himſelf with the other. Several who were preſent making themſelves merry on this incident, obſerved that one foot came luckily to the aſſiſtance of the other; and the earl, to increaſe their mirth, added, "ſo brother ſhould aſſiſt brother, when either ſtands in need." Edward, turning to the earl, as ſoon as the words were out of his mouth, replied, "ſo might my brother have helped me, if Godwin had not interpoſed." The earl, being ſurpriſed and abaſhed with this ſudden retort, was very much dejected, and with a countenance that diſcovered deep ſorrow, addreſſed the king to the following effect. "I know your majeſty is perſuaded that I am the author of his death, and that you ſtill give credit to thoſe who aſperſe me, as a traytor both to him and to yourſelf; but GOD, who knows the ſecrets of hearts, ſhall judge: if I am guiltleſs, I beg that he would ſuffer me to ſwallow this morſel unhurt; but if it ſhould ſtick by the way, you need no further proof of my guilt." Having ſaid this, he endeavoured to get the morſel down, but it ſtuck in the paſſage, and by his continued efforts to ſwallow it, ſtopped up the avenues of life and choaked him. This is the ſtory of Godwin's death, with

The death of one of the moſt powerful ſubjects that England ever ſaw, might very probably have alarmed the whole nation, and by introducing a change in the adminiſtration, might have been productive of danger. But the power of Godwin's family was not extinguiſhed by his death. It devolved almoſt entire to his heirs, and Harold his eldeſt ſon ſucceeded him in all his honour and employments, including the ſtewardſhip of the houſhold and the governments of Kent, Suſſex, and the Weſt Saxons: but was obliged to reſign his own government of Eſſex to Alfgar the ſon of Leofric. Harold had the advantage of his father in the mildneſs of his nature, and the inſinuating ſweetneſs of his addreſs. Godwin was rough, ſimple, and imperious, Harold reſpectful, affable, and ſubmiſſive; the father forced the king into his meaſures, but the ſon allured him; the roughneſs of the one bordered on tyranny, the politeneſs of the other concealed ambition under the cloak of

with all its embelliſhments; but delivered by an author who has a greater credit for being florid than exact. And as Eadmer, Hemingford, and the Saxon chronicles do not mention it, we may ſafely conclude that it is founded in calumny, and breathes nothing but malice. Stowe, from a manuſcript in his poſſeſſion, informs us more probably, that his death, though ſudden, was not attended with ſuch violent circumſtances, ſince he adds, "that it was the ſorrow of the nation, who bewailed him as a father, and a ſupport."

obſequiouſneſs; Godwin's imperiouſneſs incited the king to reſiſtance, but the artful complaiſance of Harold rendered all ſuſpicion groundleſs, and all reſiſtance vain: in a word, Godwin, though he endeavoured to command the king, was obliged to obey him; but Harold, though he ſeemed to obey the king with the greateſt ſervility, commanded him. His talents were not only adapted to promote his intereſt, but the circumſtances of the times promoted them more efficaciouſly, than it would have been proper for him to have done it with far greater abilities.

While England was enjoying the fruits of peace under the adminiſtration of ſo able a miniſter, Scotland was involved in all the calamities of a civil war. Malcolm being driven from his dominions by Macbeth, the celebrated uſurper, applied to Edward for aſſiſtance to recover his dominions. The king always ready to ſhow his kindneſs, where it was conſpicuous, ſent him an army of ten thouſand men under the command of Siward earl of Northumberland. This noble earl being joined by a body of forces under the command of Macduff marched againſt the uſurper, and defeated him after a deſperate engagement, wherein great numbers were loſt on both ſides. Siward underſtanding that his ſon was ſlain in the battle, enquired whether he had received his wounds before, and being anſwered in the affirmative,

"I am

"I * am glad to hear that, ſaid he, for he died worthy of himſelf and ſuitable to the character of my ſon."

Rees the brother of Griffin king of South Wales, having been guilty of ſeveral outrages againſt the Engliſh, was about this period taken priſoner; and being put to death by Edward's command, his head was ſent to the king, who then kept his court in the city of Glouceſter.

Not long after this expedition † Siward died of a flux, and expired in a manner that was very heroical. Finding his end approaching, he ordered his armour to be put on, then taking his ſword in his hand, he ſaid, "that he was aſhamed to die like a beaſt." and expired in the arms of his attendants, who ſupported him on each ſide.

The government of this heroic nobleman, was beſtowed by Edward on Toſti, earl Godwin's fourth ſon; Waltheof being then too young to be entruſted with a charge of ſo much importance and difficulty.

This was certainly a great acceſſion of power to Harold, and made his intereſt formidable to the reſt of the kingdom. A tranſaction happened within the compaſs of this year, which contributed to ſtrengthen it ſtill more. At a general council of the nation, Alfgar who had ſucceeded Harold in the government of the Eaſt-angles, was tried

* A. D. 1054. † A. D. 1055. ſome ſay A. D. 1056.

upon an indictment of treaſon, and being caſt, was declared an out-law and baniſhed the kingdom. The particular charge brought againſt him was, that he held a correſpondence with the Welch, who were at that time the king's enemies. ‡ His conduct immediately after his conviction, plainly ſhowed, that there were ſtrong grounds for ſuch a ſuſpicion, though the Norman writers, in order to make the character of the Godwin family odious, aſſert, that the proſecution was carried on ſecretly by Harold, out of reſentment for the king's having conferred on Alfgar the offices, which he himſelf had enjoyed.

Alfgar, if wrongfully caſt for treaſonable correſpondence with the Welch, took a very odd method to vindicate his innocence. After he had received his ſentence, he retired to Ireland, where he found means to raiſe a body of forces, and having drawn a fleet of eighteen pirates over to his party, ſailed for North Wales, where he joined Griffith the prince

‡ Smollet, who follows Rapin and Carte with too complaiſant an exactneſs, has run into the error of both theſe writers, and ſtamped authenticity on the partial accounts which have been derived from the profeſſed advocates of the Norman party. But the author of this compilation hopes, that his diſſenting from ſo popular a writer will give no offence either to him or his friends: ſince he may have his reaſons for what he aſſerts, and does not vary from the accounts of modern hiſtory, without producing his authorities, or aſſigning his reaſons.

prince of that country. After this junction they ravaged the country of Hereford; and being oppoſed by one Rodolph, the king's nephew, who was deficient both in courage and generalſhip, they put the Engliſh army to flight, and purſued them a conſiderable way.

The prince and the earl having thus obtained an eaſy victory, entered the city of Hereford, killed ſeven canons, who guarded the doors of the church, burnt the monaſtery of St. Ethelbert, together with the city, and after maſſacring great numbers of the citizens, departed with a conſiderable booty, and a vaſt number of priſoners.

Edward receiving intelligence of theſe outrages, aſſembled a ſtrong body of forces at Glouceſter, and appointed Harold their commander. The earl in conſequence of his majeſty's orders, marched againſt Griffith and having penetrated into Wales, encamped at Sowden in Caermarthenſhire. The enemy knowing too well the abilities of Harold, avoided an engagement, and fled into South Wales for ſafety. When the earl was informed of their motions, he left one part of his army with orders to engage the enemy, if they ſhould attack them, and marched with the other diviſion to fortify Hereford. While he was thus engaged, Griffith and Alfgar not thinking themſelves ſtrong enough to attack him with any probability of ſucceſs,

ceſs, ſent meſſengers to deſire a conference. After great importunities their requeſt being granted, a peace was concluded, and Alfgar having paid the arrears of his fleet, went in perſon to the king, who pardoned him, reverſed the ſentence of his baniſhment, and reſtored him to his eſtate and government.

Griffith, who was included in the articles of peace made with Alfgar, was a reſtleſs neighbour, too ambitious to be tied down by the ſanction of treaties, and too martial to be obliged to continue inactive. The next year he ſet upon Leofgar biſhop of Hereford and earl Agelnoth at a place called Glaſbyrig, and put them to death with all their followers. This act of cruelty highly incenſed Edward, who was preparing to chaſtize him for his perfidy and cruelty, when by the mediation of Aldred biſhop of Worceſter, in conjunction with Leofric and Harold, a peace was concluded to the ſatisfaction of both parties.

Edward on account of his natural inability, or his pretended chaſtity, ſeeing that there was no probability of his having any heirs, had ſent Aldred, juſt mentioned, two or three years before on an embaſſy to the emperor, to deſire he would uſe his intereſt with the king of Hungary to procure the return of Edward the ſon of Edmund Ironſide, to England. The prelate after ſtaying a whole year in Germany, had ſucceeded in

his

his embaſſy, and Edward returned to England * this year accompanied by Edgar Atheling his ſon. The joy which the Engliſh conceived at the return of this prince, was of very ſhort continuance, and interrupted ſoon after his arrival by his death. The grief in which the nation was involved by ſo great a loſs, was increaſed by the deceaſe of Leofric, who died the ſame year; and was ſucceeded in his government by his ſon Alfgar.

† Whether Alfgar, intoxicated with this acceſſion of power, had taken any meaſures inconſiſtent with the ſafety of the king, or the peace of the nation; or whether his preferment had made him inſolent, and his authority had impelled him to any acts of contumacy, or any exceſſes of violence, he was baniſhed the kingdom the year after his father's deceaſe. In his diſtreſs, he applied to Griffith, whom he had formerly joined on a ſimilar occaſion, and by means of a conſiderable body of forces which Griffith lent him, together with a ‖Norwegian fleet, which joined him at this juncture, he forced the king to take off his attainder, and to reſtore him to his eſtate and government.

The general character of the nobility in theſe days ſeems to have been, courage and imperiouſneſs; while that of the king was the reverſe, eaſineſs and timidity; hence it was

* A. D. 1057. † A. D. 1058. ‖ A. D. 1058.

was that Edward was continually ſubjected to inſults, and as often bullied into forgiveneſs. The characteriſtic of the Godwin family has been deſcribed already in that of the father, the ſame boiſterous intrepidity which diſtinguiſhed him appears in moſt of his deſcendants, but no one inherited a greater ſhare of it than Toſti. This nobleman was both bold and reſolute; he was afraid of no danger, and awed by no character; his zeal for his friend carried him beyond the bounds of diſcretion and civility, and in order to promote his intereſt he cared not whoſe anger he incurred, or what dangers he hazarded. † Accompanying Alfred, who ſucceeded Kynſig in the archbiſhopric of York, to Rome; the prelate was refuſed the pall by the pope, and in his return robbed. Upon this earl Toſti went back to his holineſs, and told him, that if he did not make Aldred amends, he would ſtop the damage out of the revenues he received from England; where he muſt not expect that his cenſures would be much regarded, when they could not terrify thieves, even at his own door. The pope ſtruck with the bravery of Toſti's addreſs, granted Aldred the pall, and every thing elſe, that he deſired.

While

† A. D. 1060; others place it in A. D. 1061, or A. D. 1062.

‖ While Toſti was abſent with the archbiſhop, Malcolm, king of the Scots, invaded Northumberland, and ravaged the earl's dominions, though there was a ſtrong treaty of alliance then ſubſiſting between them.

The Welch, though often obliged to acknowledge the ſuperiority of the Engliſh forces, and often beaten by Harold's conduct and experience, were not to be conquered; whenever the enemy diſappeared, they began their incurſions, and after they had got a ſufficient booty, would retire with it into their own country. Gryffyn ap Lhewellyn,* having exaſperated Edward by his frequent inroads, ſent Harold with a party of horſe, with orders, if poſſible, to ſurprize him; Gryffyn, however, receiving intelligence of the earl's deſign, had juſt time enough to make his eſcape, but was obliged to leave moſt of his ſhips behind him, which Harold ſeized, and having commanded them to be burnt, returned into England. As the enemy had, in their retreat, betaken themſelves to their mountains, which were almoſt inacceſſible to men in heavy armour, the earl, who was reſolved to drive them from hence, hit upon an expedient which ſurmounted this difficulty.

For

‖ A. D. 1061.

* The Saxon annals place this event in A. D. 1063, but Simeon of Durham, and Florence, in A. D. 1064.

For this purpose he armed his men with targets made of leather for their defence, and made them use javelins and other light weapons to annoy the enemy. After this alteration in the cloathing and weapons of his army, he sailed in a fleet from Bristol, round the greatest part of Wales, and being joined by his brother Tosti with a considerable body of cavalry, commenced hostilities against the enemy. His foot, enabled by their light armour, ferreted the Welch from their fastnesses, or pursued them thither, whilst his cavalry over-ran the lower country, and his fleets harrassed the maritime parts; their corn, cattle, and magazines became an easy prey; the efforts which Gryffyn made to rescue his country were fruitless: the Welch were unable to make any stand against Harold, and seeing that they were in danger of being starved by famine, or exterminated by the sword, surrendered themselves to the earl, abjured Gryffyn, and gave hostages for the due performance of the terms, which should be imposed upon them.

Not long after this submission, they rose against Gryffyn, whom they put to death; after which they cut off his head and sent it together with the stern of his ship to Harold, who transmitted them to the king, as a sign of their entire reduction. Upon this, Edward granted the kingdom to the prin-

princes Blethyn and Rithwallen, who ruled in conjunction, and ſwore fealty both to Edward and * Harold likewiſe.

† Though Toſti had diſtinguiſhed himſelf in this expedition, and rendered himſelf very popular, by his bravery; yet his conduct in his government was ſo indiſ-

* This is a remarkable circumſtance, for which we have the authority of Florence of Worceſter; and though we have admitted it into the text of this hiſtory, cannot help queſtioning its authenticity with Tyrrel, who obſerves that if it be true it ſhews that Harold was already adopted and declared preſumptive heir to the crown; but as it is not mentioned in our annals, nor in any hiſtorian excepting Florence, he declines "paſſing his word for the truth of it." Milton's acceptation of this paſſage, though not founded on authority, deſerves to be mentioned for its ingenuity. According to him, "the two princes ſwore fealty and tribute to Harold, in behalf of the king," an acceptation which clears it from every objection!

† The character which Carte gives of this nobleman, though much exaggerated by his copying the Norman writers too nearly, is in the main founded on truth, and tranſcribed for the entertainment of the readers. "Toſti, ſays our author, had all the vices and ill qualities of his father without his diſſimulation to conceal his ſentiments, and his art to cover his deſigns; his paſſions being too violent to allow of either. He was perverſe, headſtrong, and obſtinate; ambitious, proud, inſolent, brutal and cruel; boundleſs in his avarice and rapaciouſneſs; without virtue, faith, honour, religion, ſhame, or any other reſtraining quality to keep him from running into the moſt enormous exceſſes, to gratify his paſſions and reſentments, which fell upon all the world without diſtinction." *Carte.* Vol. 1. p. 354.

creet, that he loſt all his credit there, and forced his ſubjects to riſe up in arms to prevent their deſtruction.

Having a private quarrel with Goſpatric, a nobleman of this country, he got him aſſaſſinated even in the king's court. The year before he had treacherouſly put Gamel and Ulf, two other noblemen, to death, even in his own chamber. Beſides theſe outrages, he had loaded the people with exceſſive taxes, and was guilty of every kind of oppreſſion. Unable to ſupport their grievances any longer, four of the principal thanes of the country, at the head of a conſiderable army, marched into York, where they ſlew Amund and Ravenſhert, two of the earl's domeſtics, ſeized upon all the arms in this place, made themſelves maſters of his treaſury, killed two hundred of his men, and drove him out of the country. Toſti, unable to make a ſtand againſt his enemies, made loud complains to the king, who appointed Harold, his brother, to enquire into the affair, and furniſhed him with an army to reduce his enemies to reaſon.

The Northumbrians in the mean while ſent for Morcar, the ſon of Alfar, their late governour, and elected him inſtead of Toſti, after which they were joined by the inhabitants of Nottingham, Derby, and Lincolnſhire. Thus reinforced they marched ſouthward, and met with Harold at North-

Northampton. The earl, endeavouring to procure a reconciliation between them and his brother, met with an obſtinate refuſal, and was told by the Northumbrians, "that being a free people both by their birth and education, they were reſolved not to tolerate the tyranny and inhumanity of their governours; adding, that they had learned from their anceſtors, either to defend their Liberties, or to die in the attempt; though they were willing to ſhow their fidelity to a mild and juſt ruler." Harold, finding on enquiring that their reſentments againſt his brother was juſt, gave them a noble inſtance of his moderation, by drawing off his forces, conſenting to their election of Morcar in his room, and by accompanying the deputies to the king in order to have their election confirmed. Toſti, thus deſerted by his brother, and out-lawed for his crimes, left the kingdom in great diſcontent, * and retired to earl

* Huntingdon, and other writers of the Norman party, aſſign the following reaſon for this earl's exile. As the King ſat at dinner at Windſor, he commanded earl Harold to ſerve him with the cup; which Toſti, taking as an affront to him, who was the *elder* Brother, without the leaſt regard to the king's preſence, fell upon Harold, and, ſeizing him by the hair, plucked him to the ground.

This ſtory is a confutation of itſelf, as Harold was the elder brother, but not Toſti, who was the fourth ſon of Godwin, according to the authors of the *Biographia Britannica.*

Baldwin in Flanders, whoſe daughter Judith he had married.

The diſgrace of Toſti was ſo far from weakening Harold's intereſt, that it increaſed it: as it gave the people a very high idea of his integrity, and attached Morcar to his intereſt, who was more likely to be of ſervice to him than Toſti. In order to ſtrengthen his connnexions with Alfgar, Harold married his ſiſter Algitha, and thereby rendered him a firmer friend.

† About this time, ſome authors fix Harold's

† Smollet, who follows Rapin, and the authority of Brompton, ſays, that this voyage was voluntary, and undertaken in order to releaſe his brother Ulnoth and his nephew Hacun, who had been delivered as hoſtages for his father's good behaviour, and ſent into Normandy. Harold had often ſollicited the king for his conſent, who refuſed it from an apprehenſion that the earl would diſcover the agreement he had made with Duke William for ſettling the ſucceſſion. The inflexibility of the king determined Harold to take that liberty which he would not grant; who embarked for Rouen without giving the king any intimation of his deſign, but being driven by diſtreſs of weather into one of the ports of Picardy, was arreſted by orders of the count of Ponthieu, and ſet at liberty by duke William in the manner related in the text. While he was with William, he was informed of his deſigns upon the Engliſh crown, and the ſecret contract between him and Edward, and was at the ſame time informed by the duke, that he expected he ſhould reſign his pretenſions. The earl, who had never expected any colluſion between the king and the duke, and being at that time in the power of the latter, thought proper to diſſemble

Harold's going to Normandy; but as the occaſion aſſigned for his voyage is differently related by different authors, we ſhall abide by that of William of Malmeſbury, which ſeems to be the moſt authentic. According to this author, as Harold was diverting himſelf in a fiſhing boat near his ſeat at Boſenham, in Suſſex, he was carried out to ſea by his diverſion, ſomewhat farther than he intended; when a tempeſt ariſing, he was driven upon the coaſt of Picardy. The inhabitants, according to their uſual cuſtom, ſetting upon the earl and his followers, and, taking them priſoners, put them into fetters. Harold, being indued with great preſence of mind, immediately ſent to William duke of Normandy, informing him of his ſituation, and pretending that he was ſent on an embaſſy to him from king Edward, demand-

ble his ſentiments, promiſed to contribute his intereſt in behalf of William, demanded his daughter in marriage, as a proof of his attachment, and confirmed his promiſe by an oath in the preſence of the ſtates of Normandy. *Smollet*, 3d edit. vol. 1. p. 248. *Rapin*, vol. 1. p. 135. edit. 3d. fol. Wace, William of Poictou, and Carte, ſay, that he was ſent embaſſadour to carry the account to William, that he was appointed Edward's ſucceſſour. Amidſt this contrariety of ſentiments the reader might be perplexed to fix his choice, if, as Tyrrel obſerves, "one could not plainly perceive that the two laſt accounts were feigned by the later monks, and that they would not have been omitted by William of Malmeſbury, if he had known any thing of them, or thought them to have been true." Tyrrel, vol. 1. p. 93.

Baldwin in Flanders, whose daughter Judith he had married.

The disgrace of Tosti was so far from weakening Harold's interest, that it increased it: as it gave the people a very high idea of his integrity, and attached Morcar to his interest, who was more likely to be of service to him than Tosti. In order to strengthen his connnexions with Alfgar, Harold married his sister Algitha, and thereby rendered him a firmer friend.

† About this time, some authors fix Harold's

† Smollet, who follows Rapin, and the authority of Brompton, says, that this voyage was voluntary, and undertaken in order to release his brother Ulnoth and his nephew Hacun, who had been delivered as hostages for his father's good behaviour, and sent into Normandy. Harold had often sollicited the king for his consent, who refused it from an apprehension that the earl would discover the agreement he had made with Duke William for settling the succession. The inflexibility of the king determined Harold to take that liberty which he would not grant; who embarked for Rouen without giving the king any intimation of his design, but being driven by distress of weather into one of the ports of Picardy, was arrested by orders of the count of Ponthieu, and set at liberty by duke William in the manner related in the text. While he was with William, he was informed of his designs upon the English crown, and the secret contract between him and Edward, and was at the same time informed by the duke, that he expected he should resign his pretensions. The earl, who had never expected any collusion between the king and the duke, and being at that time in the power of the latter, thought proper to dissemble

Harold's going to Normandy; but as the occaſion aſſigned for his voyage is differently related by different authors, we ſhall abide by that of William of Malmeſbury, which ſeems to be the moſt authentic. According to this author, as Harold was diverting himſelf in a fiſhing boat near his ſeat at Boſenham, in Suſſex, he was carried out to ſea by his diverſion, ſomewhat farther than he intended; when a tempeſt ariſing, he was driven upon the coaſt of Picardy. The inhabitants, according to their uſual cuſtom, ſetting upon the earl and his followers, and, taking them priſoners, put them into fetters. Harold, being indued with great preſence of mind, immediately ſent to William duke of Normandy, informing him of his ſituation, and pretending that he was ſent on an embaſſy to him from king Edward, demand-

ble his ſentiments, promiſed to contribute his intereſt in behalf of William, demanded his daughter in marriage, as a proof of his attachment, and confirmed his promiſe by an oath in the preſence of the ſtates of Normandy. *Smollet*, 3d edit. vol. 1. p. 248. *Rapin*, vol. 1. p. 135. edit. 3d. fol. Wace, William of Poictou, and Carte, ſay, that he was ſent embaſſadour to carry the account to William, that he was appointed Edward's ſucceſſour. Amidſt this contrariety of ſentiments the reader might be perplexed to fix his choice, if, as Tyrrel obſerves, "one could not plainly perceive that the two laſt accounts were feigned by the later monks, and that they would not have been omitted by William of Malmeſbury, if he had known any thing of them, or thought them to have been true." Tyrrel, vol. 1. p. 93.

ing juſtice againſt Guido earl of Ponthieu; for detaining a perſon inveſted with his character, and concluding that, if his liberty muſt be purchaſed by money, he ſhould rather chooſe to pay the price of it to him, than to ſuch a mean wretch as Guido. Upon this, William gave orders that the earl ſhould be ſet at liberty, and conducted ſafe to his court. On his arrival he was treated in a manner ſuitable to his dignity, and won the confidence of the duke by the generoſity of his ſentiments and the bravery of his conduct. William being at that time engaged in an expediton againſt Bretagne, he attended him into the field, and gave ſuch ſigns of intrepidity and experience, that the duke could not help teſtifying his eſteem for him. Harold being in ſuch a ſituation that it was not prudent in him to exaſperate the duke, or to refuſe him any thing which that prince knew to be in his power, is ſaid to have made him a ſolemn promiſe, to deliver him up the caſtle of Dover on Edward's demiſe, and to uſe his intereſt to procure him the ſucceſſion to the crown of England. The duke, ſatisfied with his aſſurance, betrothed his daughter to him, and ſent him to England loaden with preſents.

‡ The year after his return, as he was making preparations at a houſe he had built in Monmouthſhire, to entertain the king, who was

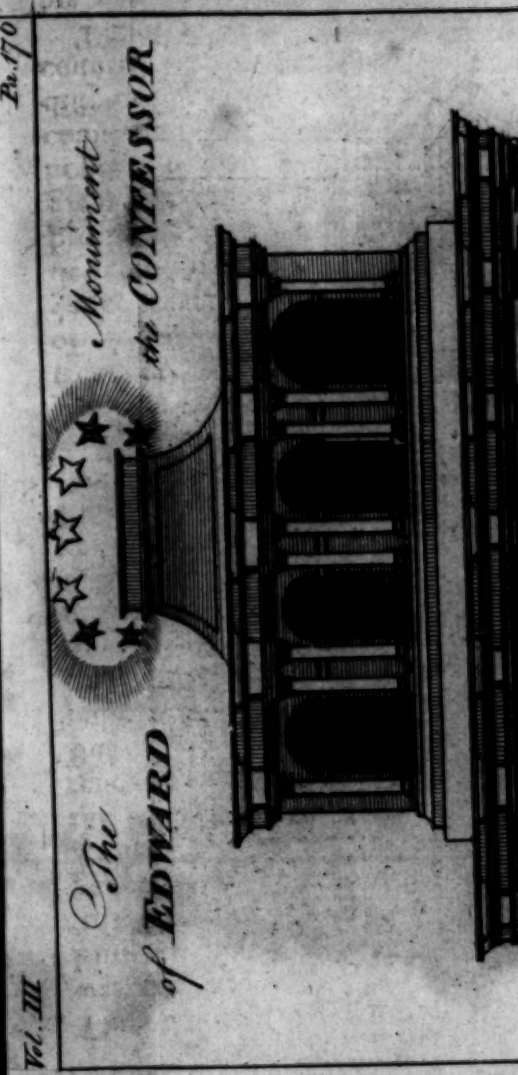
‡ A. D. 1065.

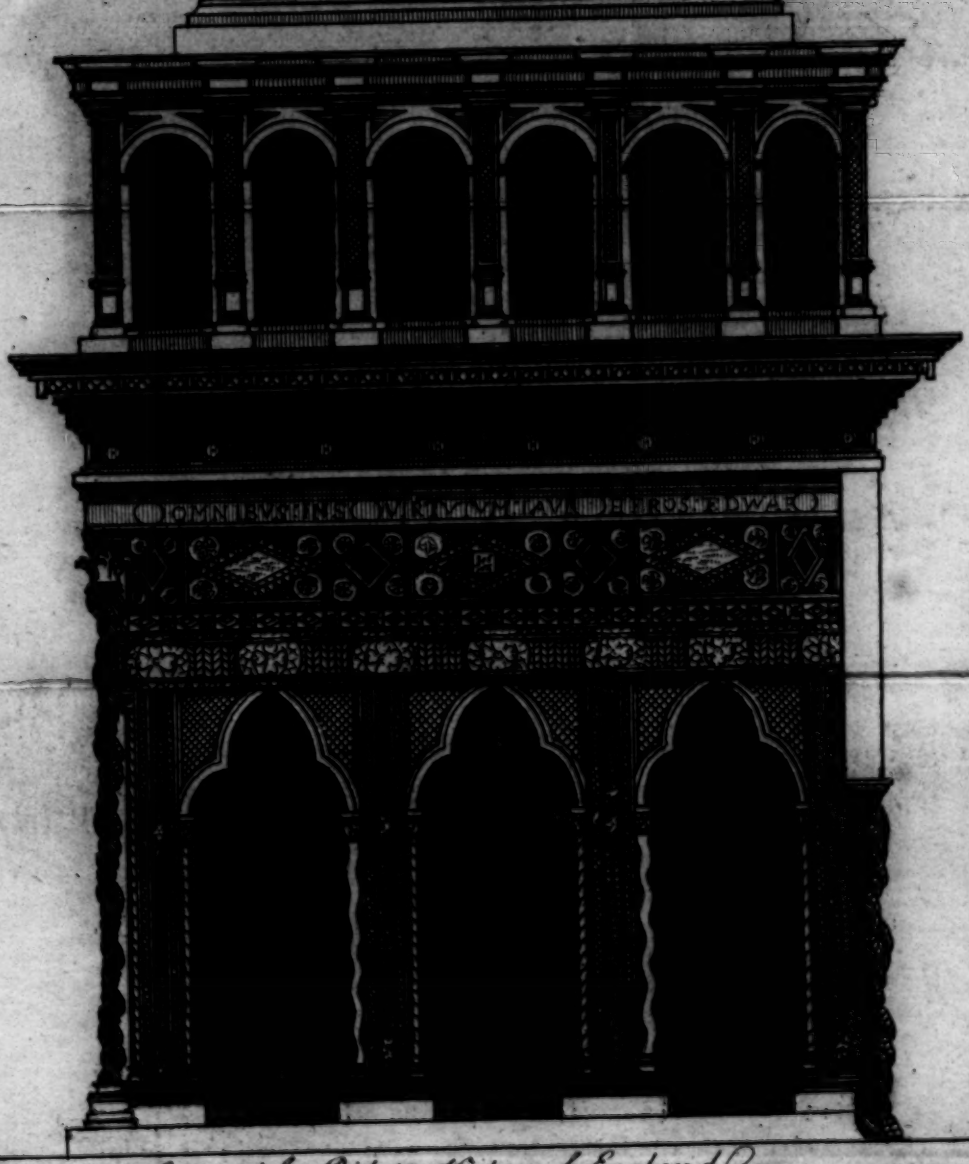
was expected down to take the diverſion of hunting; Caradoc, ſon of Griffin, prince of South Wales, ſet upon his domeſtics, and after killing them, rifled the houſe of every thing, that was valuable in it.

The king now worn out with years, and unable to perform the vow he had made of going on pilgrimage to Rome, had received the pope's diſpenſation on condition of his building the abbey at Weſtminſter: this noble ſtructure, which ſtill goes by the ſame name, was originally the temple of Apollo, and was, by king Sebert, turned into a Chriſtian church. During the devaſtations of the Danes it was deſtroyed, and had laid in ruins, till Edward rebuilt it, for the reaſon already aſſigned. A general council of the nation was called to confirm the king's charter, who exempted it from all epiſcopal juriſdiction, and granted it the privilege of a ſanctuary. The dedication of this ſacred edifice engroſſed all Edward's thoughts, and the officiouſneſs he ſhowed on the occaſion, very probably flung him into the fever which was the occaſion of his death. He remained delirious for three days, during which time the monks interpreted all his ravings into prophecies; at the expiration of this term, his reaſon returned, and, in this lucid interval, he recommended his queen to the care of his brother and the reſt of the nobility then preſent, particularly requeſting that her jointure

ture might be secured to her without the least damage or violation; he next desired some provision might be made for such of his domestics as had followed him out of Normandy, and left them at liberty either to return to their own country, or pass the remainder of their lives in this kingdom: after this, he ordered that his remains should be deposited in St. Peter's church at Westminster, which he had lately dedicated; and having received the blessed eucharist, and recommended his soul to heaven, expired without the least struggle or groan.

Edward, was a prince of a fair and ruddy complexion; well shaped and handsome in his person; rather tall in stature, and, in his latter years, venerable for his long white beard, as appears from his pictures, and the copy of his great seal fronting this page. The royal ornaments became him, when he appeared in state; but were worn by him without the least affectation of parade. He was an utter enemy to all luxury, and was remarkably sparing in his diet: his favourite exercises were hawking and hunting, which he practised every morning, as soon as divine service was over. He was so much averse to war, that he frequently declared, during his exile in Normandy, that he had rather live in that condition for ever, than obtain the kingdom at the expence of any man's life. His simplicity, scrupulous virtue, and inoffensive





Engravd for Rider's History of England.

Vol. III.

The great Seal of Edward the Confessor.

Engravid for Rider's History of England

BRITISH MUSEUM

ſenſive manner of life, qualified him rather for a convent, than a throne, and by making him void of all paſſions of his own, expoſed him to be guided by thoſe of others. To this we muſt aſcribe the implicit manner in which he followed the inſtigations of Robert the Norman, and the injuſtice he was guilty of to his ſubjects in beſtowing all the great poſts on perſons of that nation. The tranquillity of his reign was certainly remarkable, if we conſider the factions which ſubſiſted between his nobles; but then it ſhould be remembered, that he owed his ſucceſſes to the Godwin family, who were not only the bulwarks of his ſafety, but of the nation's ſafety likewiſe. Some have repreſented him as void of all paſſion, but they ſhould rather have ſaid, he was void of all the ſocial affections: his treatment of his wife and his mother would juſtify ſuch a charge; nay, they even extort it. His chaſtity, which the monks have applauded ſo highly, as to found his merits of being cannonized thereupon, was it not owing to natural frigidity, is ſuch a violation of the marriage vow as ought to tranſmit eternal infamy * on his memory.

Though

* Voltaire obſerves, on this occaſion, that "one of the great faults or great misfortunes of this king, was, his having no children by his wife, daughter to one of the moſt powerful noblemen of his kingdom. He hated his wife as well as his own mother, and, for reaſons of ſtate, had

Though honoured with the title of a saint, and ranked by the flattery of superstition among the martyrs; his irascibility, and inexorable resentment were shown so flagrantly in the affair of Eustace, and in his antipathy to Godwin's family, that it would be a stretch of equity to deem him inculpable. Had this excess appeared in a private person, it would have been sufficient to brand him with ignominy; but as it was committed by a king, who as a great benefactor to the monks, it was esteemed a venial crime, unworthy of blame, and unworthy of notice. Yet as the unguarded actions of private life are the best marks of a person's real disposition and character, the reader will not be at a loss to conclude, that our charge of revenge is not groundless, when he attends to the following anecdote. One day as he was at the chace, a country fellow crossed the hounds and spoiled his diversion; which putting him into a great passion, he rode up to the rustic, as if he was going to beat him, and saying, "By GOD's Mother, I would be even with you if I could;"

had them both removed from court. However the barrenness of his mariage-bed proved the occasion of his canonization; for it was pretended, that he had made a vow of chastity; a rash vow surely for a married man, and highly absurd for a king, who stood in need of an heir to his dominions. But by this vow, real or pretended, he forged new chains for his country." See *Smollet*'s elegant translation of Voltaire. Vol. 1. p. 268.

could;" left him. The imputation of a criminal weakneſs and eaſineſs of temper is defended by the following anecdote, related by Ailred. One day as he was repoſing himſelf on his couch, with his curtains drawn round him, a page, employed in the menial offices of the houſe, diſcovering an iron-cheſt left open, filled his pockets with the money and went his way; the king, who perceived him at work through the curtains, obſerved him without ſaying a word, or giving him the leaſt diſturbance. The boy having diſpoſed of the money he had pilfered, was ſo much encouraged by his ſucceſs that he returned to the cheſt to fetch more; but the king thinking him too unconſcionable in his ſecond attempt, called out to him with great deliberation: "Sirrah, ſays he, you had beſt be contented with what you have got, for if Hugolin, my chamberlain, ſhould detect you, you would not only get yourſelf ſoundly whipped, but would likewiſe looſe all that you have ſtolen already." The numerous miracles he is ſuppoſed to have performed deſerve to be ranked among the legendary accounts of papal heroes; nor do the pretended cures of * the ſcrophulous humour, called the

* The ſuppoſed cure of the king's evil by touching, which this king pretended to in imitation of thoſe of France, one would imagine to be ſo ridiculous a pretence, as to have been long ſince exploded. Thoſe who confine it as a kind of heir-loom to the ſucceſſors in the royal line, and tell

the king's evil, deserve more credit. As his laws were looked upon by future kings as

tell us seriously of the many cures performed by persons thus circumstanced, deserve as much credit as the Abbot of Rieval, who tells us that Edward was elected king when in his mother's womb, and is one of the asserters of the king's miraculous gift in this point. But when we find Mr. Carte discoursing seriously on this subject, and establishing his sentiments by numerous quotations, it must surely extort a smile from the contracted brow of gravity, and raise a dimple in the cheek of the most austere critic. However, as his sentiments are no less ingenious than sophistical, and the curiosity of the reader may have excited a wish to know what they are, the author has thought he might be excused for transcribing them. "It was to the *hereditary right* in the royal line, says Mr. Carte, that people, in Malmesbury's days, ascribed the *supernatural* virtue of our kings in curing the schirrous tumours, called the king's evil: though this author is willing to impute it to the singular piety of Edward. There is no proof of any of our kings touching for that distemper, more antient than this king: of whom Ailred, as well as Malmesbury observe, that he cured a young married woman, reduced by it to a deplorable condition, by stroking the place affected with his hand; upon which she grew sensibly better, the humour dispersed, the scar wore off, and, in a week's time, the cure was perfected. There are no accounts of the four first kings of Norman, or foreign race, ever attempting to cure that complaint: but that Henry II. both touched those afflicted with it, and cured them, is attested by Peter Blessensis who had been his chaplain. Bradwardin, archbishop of Canterbury, under Richard II. the lord Fortescue and other grave authors, give the like testimony in behalf of the cure of, as well as practice, by that prince's successors, besides a great number of evidences

that

as the ſtandard of their conduct and adminiſtration, and made one of the articles of the

that may be drawn from records, many of which are printed by Tucker, having been communicated to him, by the late *Garter*, the learned Mr. Anſtis. There is a particular religious office, uſed at the time of touching, not diſagreeable to the ſimplicity of the Saxon times; in the ceremonial whereof, the king, at the reading of the firſt goſpel, gently draws both his hands over the ſore, much after the manner uſed by Edward. All our Engliſh kings have continued to uſe this rite to this day; (our author aſſerts this in the year 1747) and the french, from the time of St. Louis, if not of Philip Auguſte, have imitated them in it, with the like ſalutary effect. Some of the french writers aſcribe this gift of healing to their king's devotion towards the relicks of St. Marculph in the church of Corbigny in Champagne; to which the kings of France, immediately after their coronation at Riems, uſed to go in ſolemn proceſſion, and it muſt be owned, there was formerly a veneration paid to this Saint in England. It was in memory of him, that a room in the palace of Weſtminſter, frequently mentioned in the rolls of parliament, at the time of its aſſembling, was called the chamber of St. Marculph, being probably the place where our kings uſed to touch for the evil. It is now called the painted chamber, and though the name of that ſaint hath been long forgot in this nation, yet the *ſanative virtue* of *our kings* ſtill continues. Nor is it confined to them *alone*; for tho' Forteſcue (at the time of whoſe writing there had been no ſovereign hereditary queen, crowned in this realm) imagined it was not communicated to queens, becauſe they were not anointed in the hands, the contrary hath been ſince proved by abundant experience. Tucker relates one remarkable inſtance in the cure of a roman catholic; who being put into priſon, perhaps, for recuſancy, and terribly afflicted with

th

coronation oath, it will not be improper, to give a rude ſketch of them. In order to promote learning, and provide againſt the inconveniences to which perſons of a ſtudious turn are generally expoſed, he made a law to ſecure to them the quiet enjoyment of their eſtates and properties. All cauſes in which the church was concerned were to have the preference to any others; and every perſon who was a tenant to the church was obliged to bring his actions in the eccleſiaſtical courts, without any appeal, unleſs he was denied juſtice. The clergy were likewiſe exempted from the civil juriſdiction. The privileges of ſanctuaries were confirmed, and no fugitive was allowed to be taken from thence

the king's evil, was, after he had been there for a tedious time, at a vaſt expence to phyſicians without the leaſt relief, touched by queen Elizabeth, and perfectly cured. This gave him occaſion to ſay, he was now convinced by undoubted experience, that the Pope's excommunication of that queen ſignified nothing; ſince ſhe ſtill continued bleſſed with ſo miraculous a quality. In order to obviate an objection which might be made to this prolix account, our author adds in a note, "That the cure can't be imputed to the ſtrength of imagination, is evident from the numbers of children that have been ſo cured. Dr. Heylin, an eye witneſs of ſuch cures, ſays, I have ſeen ſome children brought before the king (Charles I.) by the hanging ſleeves, ſome hanging at the mother's breaſts, and others in the arms of their nurſes; all cured without the help of a ſerviceable imagination. Carte, vol. 1. p. 358. The reader may eaſily underſtand what this writer drives at by conſidering the words we have printed in italics.

thence unless by the bishop and his officers. Every offence against the peace of the church was left to the cognizance of the bishop of the diocese in which it was committed; the offender was obliged to give security, that he would make satisfaction to GOD, the king, and the church, within forty days, and in case he absconded was to be out-lawed; after which, if he was discovered he was to be surrendered to the king: but if he made defence, any person was indemnified for killing him on the spot. The things which were subject to small tythes were specified, in order to prevent disputes. The manner in which ordeal, or trial of innocence, was to be performed by fire or water, is described very minutely. The payment of Romescot is strictly enjoined, but, if refused, was to be levied by the king's justice, because it was the king's * alms.

Protections from arrests on certain days, and in certain districts, besides those which were granted a person under the king's own hand, called in Saxon "*Cyninges honde seale gryth*;" were now confirmed. All treasure trove was declared to be the king's, unless found in a church or church-yard; in which case, if it were gold, it was entirely the

* Tyrrel judiciously remarks, "that we may from hence observe how much the romish writers are mistaken, who will needs make these *Peter-pence* to have been a *tribute* from the kings of England to the pope."

king's property; but if of silver, one half of it was to be given to his majesty, and the other half to the church. The law made to prevent murder, or punish it when committed, particularly deserves our notice, on account of its minuteness, and its utility. "If any one was murdered, inquest was to be made after the author in the village or town, where the body was found; in case the murtherer was discovered, he was to be delivered up to justice, within eight days after the commission of the fact; on condition that the person could not be found, a month and a day was allowed for searching after him; and in case he could not be apprehended within that space, the town was obliged to pay forty-six marks; if the town was unable to pay that sum, the fine was to be levied on the hundred. The money thus raised was to be sealed up by one of the thanes, or free-holders, and sent to the treasury, to be preserved untouched for a year and a day; within which space, if the murtherer was discovered, it was to be returned; but on the contrary, six marks were to be paid to the relations of the person murthered, and the king was to have the remaining forty. If the deceased had no relations, his lord was to have the six marks; in case he had no lord, then his sworn friend and companion was to have them; and in default of those, the king was to have the whole sum

to

to himſelf. Thoſe ſtatues which more particularly concern the office and prerogative of the king are compiled with great judgment, and afford noble hints to all that ſucceed to the Engliſh throne: in deſcribing the office of a king, the ſtatute informs us, that he is the vice-gerent of the ſupreme king, and is appointed to govern and defend this earthly kingdom, and the people of the lord, and above all things ſhould reverence his holy church and extirpate all evil doers out of it; which unleſs he do, he forfeits his title and dignity. This latter clauſe refers to pope John's anſwer to Pepin and Charles, in which they had conſulted him whether a fool was capable of wearing the crown. The Jews that were in the kingdom were declared to be under the king's protection, ſo as not to be at liberty to ſerve any great man without his leave. Every act of extortion and oppreſſion ſeemed peculiarly to demand this monarch's notice: he was ſo much an enemy to laying any unneceſſary burthens on the ſubject, that he remitted the tax of Danegelt, as we have already obſerved, and could not endure an exciſeman or collector. As he was averſe to rapaciouſneſs in his own conduct, he likewiſe guarded againſt it in that of others; and for this end forbad all uſurers to continue in his kingdom; and in caſe any perſon was convicted

for usury, he was punished with confiscation of goods, and deemed an out-law. In order to establish the king's prerogative free from dispute, it was declared by law, that he had a power to pardon life and loss of member, on condition that the malefactor made such satisfaction to the persons injured, as was in his power, and likewise found sureties for his good behaviour. It was likewise declared, that he should have the power of setting free any captive or prisoner, in whatever city or borough he came, or if he met him in his way, by his mere word or command, on condition, that satisfaction was made to the party injured. In case a person guilty of murder, treason, or any such crime, was pardoned by the king as to life and member, he was notwithstanding obliged to abjure the realm, and banish himself as soon as possible; and if found in the kingdom after, might be put to death by the first person who met him, with impunity. Such were the laws of Edward the Confessor; collected from those which had been enacted by former kings, and afterwards enforced by William the Conqueror. They serve to inform us of the principles of the times, and show us how this monarch was affected towards the clergy: the immunities and privileges, he then gave them, might well deserve canonization at their hands, who generally rewarded their benefactors with the title

the title of ſaints, though immerſed in vice, and branded their enemies with eternal infamy, though adorned with virtues, and exemplary for their heroiſm. To ſum up this monarch's character in a few words, he was a bad huſband, a bad ſon, an indolent king, a faithleſs friend, an inexorable enemy, a dupe to foreigners, and notwithſtanding honoured by the monks with the title of a ſaint, and a confeſſor.

HAROLD II. A. D. 1066.

EDWARD, notwithſtanding the great character given him by ſucceſſive writers, was ſo much engroſſed with the religious pageantry exhibited in the dedication of St. Peter's Weſtminſter, that he had nominated no one for the ſucceſſion to the throne, though he had time enough during his late indiſpoſition, and had employed the lucid interval he enjoyed, juſt before his demiſe, in ſettling affairs of far leſs conſequence.

Harold had however taken his meaſures ſo prudently, that it was impoſſible for any one to ſtep between him and the crown. All circumſtances conſpired in his favour; the only competitors he had were Edgar Atheling, and William duke of Normandy, but the former was thought too young to be entruſted with the ſceptre at ſo critical a juncture, and the latter was a foreigner, and of

a

a country to which the English had lately shown an implacable aversion. However, as Harold could not lay a claim to the throne by descent, he was determined to gain it by the most incontestible of all rights, the suffrages of the people: and in order to gain their sanction as soon as possible, the deceased king was buried the next morning after his death. For it was a custom observed in those days, to defer the ceremony of unction, and the coronation of a new prince, till such time as his predecessors was interred. As soon as these funeral obsequies were performed, the assembly met for the election of a new king, and Harold was chosen, great numbers of the nobility, and all the bishops declaring in his favour. Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, being at that time either indispos'd, or averse to Harold's election, he was anointed by Aldred archbishop of York. The disagreement between the authors who have related the manner in which Harold acceded to the throne is so great, that it is not easy to reconcile them: But that the reader may have his curiosity satisfied, without our giving any bias to his judgment; their different opinions are added to prevent him the trouble of hunting after them in a multiplicity of authors, which are not easily to be met with.

Eadmer and Hoveden tell us, that Harold was nominated by Edward for his successor; and

and being for that reaſon, elected by all the chief men of the kingdom, was the ſame day anointed.

* Henry de Silgrave relates, that Harold came to Edward, as he was lying on his death-bed, deſiring him to appoint a ſucceſſor: that he replied, he had already nominated duke William for his heir: but the earl and his friends ſtill perſiſting in this requeſt, the king, turning his face to the wall, replied, "When I am dead, let the Engliſh make either the duke, or the earl, king."

Malmeſbury, who inclines to the Norman party, aſſerts, that Harold, finding a great diſagreement among the nobles about the ſucceſſion, ſeized the crown, placed it on his own head, and intimidated the aſſembly ſo, as to extort an oath of allegiance from them.

Huntingon, without mentioning any thing of the election, informs us, that ſeveral of the Engliſh were inclined to favour the pretenſions of Edgar Atheling.

And Ingulph, a cotemporary writer, who ſpeaks with great caution, tells us, that Harold, wickedly forgetting the oath he had formerly made to Duke William, intruded himſelf

* This author wrote in the time of Edward I. his hiſtory is now in manuſcript in the Cottonian collection, marked Cleopatra, A. 12.

himself into the throne, and was solemnly crowned by Alred archbishop of York.

As soon as Harold was crowned, he took all those measures to secure the affections of the people which a person in his situation ought. He began with abolishing all unjust laws, and introducing new ones; he was a great patron to churches and monasteries, showed a great veneration for the clergy, punished all offenders, and took all precautions to defend his country from any invasion. *

These measures were at that time no less polite than necessary, as he had many difficulties to struggle with. A great part of the nation were dissatisfied with his title, and paid him an unwilling obedience. William duke of Normandy laid claim to his crown, and was making great preparations to support his pretensions. Besides, his brother Tosti, thinking himself used by him with great rigour, was solliciting aids from his father-in-law, if not exciting William to hasten his expedition. He met with a favourable reception from William at Rouen, and was encouraged by him to put his premeditated revenge into execution.

Tosti being supplied with a fleet of forty,

* Dr. Smollet adds, without producing his authority, that he created Edgar Atheling earl of Oxford, cultivated the old nobility with kindness and veneration, and took such pains to secure their property by wholesome regulations, that there was no danger of his authority's being shaken by domestic troubles." vol. 1. p. 253. ed. 3d.

forty, or ſixty ſail at moſt, by his father-in-law, made a deſcent upon the iſle of Wight, where he raiſed conſiderable contributions. After this ſucceſs he put to ſea again, and infeſted all the coaſt, till he came to Sandwich. On the firſt news of his brother's invaſion, Harold fitted out a large fleet, and raiſed a conſiderable body of horſe, in order to march againſt him in perſon, and to prevent the effects of his malice. But Toſti receiving intelligence of his deſign, preſſed all the ſeamen in theſe parts, and ſailed for Lincolnſhire, where he burnt ſeveral villages, and put a conſiderable number of the inhabitants to the ſword. Edwin earl of Mercia, and Morcar earl of Northumberland, encountered him here, routed his army, deſtroyed a great part of his fleet, and obliged him to take refuge in Scotland with twelve ſhips, which were all that remained.

The duke of Normandy was a more formidable enemy to Harold, and ſo many circumſtances conſpired in his favour, that his deſign upon the crown was almoſt certain of ſucceſs. He had married Maude daughter of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, who being guardian of Phillip king of France, he had nothing to fear from that country, while abſent on his expedition. He was at peace with all his neighbours, except Conan count of of Bretagne, and death had removed that enemy out of his way. The kingdoms which

had

had been erected in Italy, by some of his Norman subjects, enabled them to gain the court of Rome to his interest. The Normans were in the height of their military prowess, and had distinguished themselves for their great exploits, in an age when courage was stretched to a degree almost romantic. The peace which then reigned in Normandy; the personal merit and character of the duke; the good order which reigned throughout his dominions; and the magnificence of his court, had drawn thither the chief nobility and the bravest persons from France, Burgundy, and all parts of Europe. All were eager to embark in new adventures and to signalize their valour in his favour.

As for England, it was in a very ill condition to oppose so formidable an enemy. It was an open country, so destitute of fortifications, that, excepting Dover, London, and two or three towns more, there was not a place in it fit to sustain a siege. The people, softened by a long peace of fifty years, were unfit to undergo the fatigues of war, and understood little of military discipline: besides which, they were still more enervated by idleness, intemperance and debauchery. The nobility and gentry were immersed in voluptuousness and luxury; and regardless of the public good. The clergy were not entirely exempt from the vices of the age. The bishops, who were natives of Normandy,

Normandy, Brabant, and Flanders, were naturally inclined to favour the cauſe of William; and ſeveral of the nobility who were of Daniſh extraction, as well as Ralph Peverel earl of the Eaſt-angles, the earl of Hereford, Fitz Scrobi in Salop, Ralph Peverel in Eſſex, and Danbin de Boar, who were actually Normans, and could not but wiſh ſucceſs to the duke of Normandy. Harold ſeems to have had notice of his danger in this quarter, and had, by way of precaution, baniſhed † ſuch foreigners as had been introduced into the iſland, and ſettled by king Edward.

Theſe circumſtances were ſo many incentives to William to undertake his expedition; but, to give his attempt the ſanction of juſtice, he ſent over embaſſadours to demand of Harold the reſignation of the crown in his favour, to put him in mind of his oath and the ſtipulations between them, and to threaten him with an invaſion, in caſe of a refuſal. Harold, who was a perſon of too great ſpirit to be intimidated with threats, received his meſſage with ſome degree of ſcorn; and returned him an anſwer to the following effect. "‡ That as for the conſum-

† From Wace's hiſtory, in manuſcript, lately in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Carte.

‡ Voltaire obſerves, on this occaſion, "that the baſtard William could plead neither the right of election, nor that of inheritance, nor even any party in his favour in England. He pretended that, in a former voyage to

mation of the marriage, which he had promiſed to his daughter, it was ſuperſeded by her death: if indeed he had made him any promiſe of the kingdom, it was what was out of his power to perform, without the conſent and decree of the great council of the kingdom. Raſh vows, or a raſh oath was not binding; as he himſelf knew, in the caſe of the vow of a virgin, which was by the law, declared void if made without the conſent of her parents; and with reſpect to the diſpoſal of a kingdom this argument held ſtill ſtronger, as it was not to be transferred by the meer caprice of another, or without the conſent of the people. With reſpect to himſelf, he inſinuated, he had been elected by thoſe who had a right to confer that dignity upon him, and concluded with telling William, that he was guilty of an act of injuſtice to require him to reſign a crown which had been conferred on him by ſo inconteſtible a right."

This anſwer plainly ſhowed William that he had no other reſource but arms; and ſet him upon applying to the neighbouring princes

to this iſland, king Edward had made a will in his favour, which, however, no one had ever ſeen. He pretended, moreover, that he had formerly delivered Harold from priſon, who had, in return, yielded up to him his right to the crown of England. Theſe weak reaſons he ſupported by a powerful army." *Smollet*'s traſlation of Voltaire, vol. 1. p. 269.

princes for ſuccours. His application ſucceeded beyond his moſt ſanguine wiſhes, and met with ſcarce any difficulty from the princes, whom he addreſſed on this occaſion. Even his inveterate enemy, Geoffry Martel count of Anjoy, ſent him a conſiderable body of men; Guy, count of Ponthieu, followed his example; Euſtace, count of Boulogne, and the vicomte of Thouars in Poictou, joined him in perſon with their vaſſals. Howel, count of Bretagne, levied a body of five thouſand men, conſiſting of cavalry and infantry, which he ſent under the command of his eldeſt ſon Alan Fergant, attended by the Viſcounts of Leon and Dinam. The Emperour Henry IV. and Philip I. of France, were minors, but on William's application the imperial council iſſued out a proclamation allowing all the vaſſals of the empire to enter into his ſervice.

As William was a vaſſal of the crown of France, he entertained great hopes of more powerful aids from thence, than from any other quarter: But when he waited upon the king to requeſt his aſſiſtance, he was referred to the regency, who inſtead of countenancing his undertaking, adviſed him to deſiſt from it. The reaſons which induced them to this meaſure were ſuch as carry with them no ſmall weight, and ſhew that they were perſons of ſome fore-ſight and ſagacity. "They thought that the duke of

Normandy was already too powerful for a vaſſal; and if he added England to his other dominions would be an over-match for the crown of France; and that it would be very impolitic to provoke the Engliſh, by aggrandizing a race of norman princes, whoſe increaſe of power would elate them with pride, and render them both dangerous and eternal enemies to the French monarchy." It is no wonder then that William miſcarried in his application to the French regency, notwithſtanding he offered to hold his kingdom in vaſſalage from the king of France. Baldwin, earl of Flanders, his father-in-law, being thus hindered from aſſiſting him openly, did it however underhand, by ſupplying him with money, by ſecretly encouraging the French nobility to take part with him, and by uſing all his intereſt among his own ſubjects in Flanders for the ſame purpoſe. What contributed to render William's enterprize more ſucceſsful than any other expedient, was the pope's declaration in his favour, who received Liſieux, the duke's ambaſſadour, with the greateſt marks of favour, and readily granted him whatever he requeſted in his maſter's behalf. The papal juriſdiction was not then eſtabliſhed over theſe kingdoms, and Alexander II. thinking this a fair opportunity, promoted William's enterprize with a view

of

of extending his own intereſt. For this purpoſe, he ſent the duke a ring with * one of St. Peter's hairs in it, together with a conſecrated banner, and at the ſame time publiſhed a bull wherein he declared the juſtice of the duke's cauſe, and animated every chriſtian power to aſſiſt him in making himſelf maſter of the Engliſh throne. Harold was denounced a perjured uſurper, and every one, who oppoſed William's deſigns was declared to be excommunicated. This declaration had a very great effect on the Engliſh prelates, who began now to think that Harold deſerved the cenſure paſſed on him by his holineſs; and being dazzled with the glare of papal varniſh, imagined that William's pretenſions were founded in juſtice, and ſupported by reaſon. The declaration had likewiſe a great effect on ſeveral brave men in all parts of Europe, who flocked to William's ſtandard, and panted for fame and glory under his auſpices.

So many perſons offered their ſervice on this occaſion, that the duke ſeemed to be diſtreſſed by their numbers. In order, however, to render them ſerviceable, he ſelected about ſixty thouſand veterans from the reſt; thinking them more than a match for any body of forces, that Harold could bring into the field againſt him. Although re-

* Wace's manuſcript hiſtory, p. 470, and 476.

wards and settlements in England were the only pay they expected for their service, yet William's finances were so low, that he was very much perplexed for money to provide transports, and furnish his men with subsistence. In expectation of meeting with the necessary supplies, he assembled the Norman barons in a diet at L'Isle bonne, but after he had acquainted them with his intended expedition, after he had shown them that he was obliged to undertake it in vindication of his honour, and had endeavoured to animate them by motives of glory, and the strong probability of success to become parties in his quarrel; he found them very cool in espousing his cause. They refused furnishing him with money for carrying on his expedition; alledging,* Normandy was so much exhausted by his late wars, that if he should not succeed it would be impoverished; and that if he did succeed, it would become only a province to England." William, thus disappointed of a public supply, was determined to borrow money of particular persons. For this purpose he applied separately to the monied men in his kingdom, and succeeded beyond his expectations. The nobility and merchants

* From the Chron. Norman. Cambden's Britannia, p. ccxi. Gibson's ed...on, and *Smollet*'s translation of Voltaire, p. 269.

chants ſeemed to vie with each other in their reſpective contributions, inſomuch, that a ſum was ſoon ſubſcribed ſufficient to defray the charges of this expedition. The affair was at length reſumed again in the great council, and carried by a wile of William Fitzoſborne, count of Breteuil, and conſtable of Normandy. This nobleman had in the former diet declared ſtrongly againſt the intended expedition, and in order to convince the aſſembly, that they were under no compulſion to aſſiſt the duke, boldly maintained, that though they were obliged, as his vaſſals, to aſſiſt him in the defence of their own country, yet they were under no obligation, by their tenures, to ſerve in foreign expeditions. This popular and animated ſpeech ingratiated him ſo much, with the oppoſers of the enterprize, that they choſe him for their ſpeaker, and commiſſioned him to repreſent their ſentiments to the duke at their ſecond ſitting. But how great was their ſurprize, when, inſtead of urging the reaſons he had before made uſe of againſt the expedition, they heard him declare in their name, they were ready to embark in it, and aſſiſt him with double the ſervice they were bound to by their tenures! This offer was immediately applauded by Odo, biſhop of Bayeux, Robert, count of Montain, the king's brothers by the mother's ſide, and by the count

de

wards and settlements in England were the only pay they expected for their service, yet William's finances were so low, that he was very much perplexed for money to provide transports, and furnish his men with subsistence. In expectation of meeting with the necessary supplies, he assembled the Norman barons in a diet at L'Isle bonne, but after he had acquainted them with his intended expedition, after he had shown them that he was obliged to undertake it in vindication of his honour, and had endeavoured to animate them by motives of glory, and the strong probability of success to become parties in his quarrel; he found them very cool in espousing his cause. They refused furnishing him with money for carrying on his expedition; alledging,* "Normandy was so much exhausted by his late wars, that if he should not succeed it would be impoverished; and that if he did succeed, it would become only a province to England." William, thus disappointed of a public supply, was determined to borrow money of particular persons. For this purpose he applied separately to the monied men in his kingdom, and succeeded beyond his expectations. The nobility and merchants

* From the Chron. Norman. Cambden's Britannia, p. ccxi. Gibson's ed...on, and *Smollet*'s translation of Voltaire, p. 269.

chants ſeemed to vie with each other in their reſpective contributions, inſomuch, that a ſum was ſoon ſubſcribed ſufficient to defray the charges of this expedition. The affair was at length reſumed again in the great council, and carried by a wile of William Fitzoſborne, count of Breteuil, and conſtable of Normandy. This nobleman had in the former diet declared ſtrongly againſt the intended expedition, and in order to convince the aſſembly, that they were under no compulſion to aſſiſt the duke, boldly maintained, that though they were obliged, as his vaſſals, to aſſiſt him in the defence of their own country, yet they were under no obligation, by their tenures, to ſerve in foreign expeditions. This popular and animated ſpeech ingratiated him ſo much, with the oppoſers of the enterprize, that they choſe him for their ſpeaker, and commiſſioned him to repreſent their ſentiments to the duke at their ſecond ſitting. But how great was their ſurprize, when, inſtead of urging the reaſons he had before made uſe of againſt the expedition, they heard him declare in their name, they were ready to embark in it, and aſſiſt him with double the ſervice they were bound to by their tenures! This offer was immediately applauded by Odo, biſhop of Bayeux, Robert, count of Montain, the king's brothers by the mother's ſide, and by the count

de

de Longueville. Fitzosborne not only promised for them, but animated them likewise to make good what he had proffered, by his own example; he offered to equip no less than forty vessels, at his own expence, and the whole assembly, ashamed to contradict him, agreed to perform every article he had promised in their names.

The hopes of making a fortune in England, took place of all other considerations; every one was studious of recommending himself to the duke's favour; the utmost diligence was used in equipping and manning the vessels, which each of them had promised to furnish, and a fleet, consisting of *eight hundred large vessels, besides three thousand of a smaller kind, was fitted out, with a dispatch that surprized and astonished. The rendezvous for this armament was appointed at St. Pierre sur Dive, where the army embarked. From thence it proceeded to St. Valeri at the mouth of the Some, were it was detained by contrary winds.

William, though thus powerfully supported, did not think proper to rely upon his own strength in this expedition; he had already incouraged Tosti's invasion, and having great connections in Norway, he had taken measures to stir up Harold Harfager, or the Fair Haired, to fall upon the northern parts

* From Wace's manuscript history.

parts of England while he attacked the ſouthern. For this purpoſe, Harfager, who laid a claim to the crown of England, ſet ſail with a numerous fleet, which, when joined with Toſti's ſquadron, amounted to * three hundred ſail. After their junction they ſailed up the Humber, and being oppoſed by the earls of Mercia and Northumberland with a raw and undiſciplined army, routed them at Fulford. In conſequence of this defeat York became a prey to the enemy, and was taken by ſtorm. Harold, on receiving intelligence of Harfager's deſcent, put himſelf at the head of a body of veterans, and had fitted out a fleet to oppoſe him: but, though he made ſome forced marches, could not come up 'till five days after this diſaſter. The two armies meeting at Stanford-bridge, now called Battle-bridge in Yorkſhire, a bloody battle was fought, in which Harfager and Toſti were killed, and almoſt all their army cut to pieces. Thoſe who eſcaped to the fleet were in a great meaſure indebted for their reſcue to the valour of a brave Norwegian, who ſingly defended the paſſage of the bridge on the Derwent, for three hours, againſt the whole Engliſh army, during which time he ſlew no leſs than forty of their men with his battle-axe

* Simeon of Durham ſays they amounted to five hundred.

tle-axe, and was at last slain by an arrow. While the king was thus engaged on land, his admirals were not less successful at sea; the Norwegian squadron was beaten, several of the ships that lay in the Ouse were taken, and Olaff, the son of Harfager, who was left to guard the fleet, was glad to capitulate; on condition of his being allowed to embark the scattered remains of the army on board twenty vessels, and leaving all the spoil that had been taken, behind him. ‖ The treasure acquired by this victory was immense, if not incredible: the gold of itself, was as much as seven strong fellows could carry, and the rest of the booty of proportionable value.

Though this action delivered the kingdom from a formidable enemy, it was not yet out of danger. The very conquest was not less detrimental to Harold's interest, than a defeat might have been. The booty instead of being distributed, according to custom, among his men, as the reward of their bravery, was entirely engrossed by Harold himself.

‖ Dr. Campbell observes, in his naval history, "that this was one of the greatest victories that we find recorded by our historians; for, in the beginning of this expedition, the king of Denmark had conquered the Orkneys; and, indeed, considering the force with which he invaded it, there was no small probability of his reducing England. By this defeat, the king entirely frustrated that design." *Campbell's* naval hist. vol. 1. p. 84. in 8vo.

himſelf. His motive indeed might have been frugality, but it was found at laſt to be very bad policy. His view might have been to apply it to the expences incurred by defending himſelf againſt the Normans, and to carry on that war without laying any burthens on his ſubjects: but the ſoldiers aſcribed it to avarice, and inſolence; looked on him as one who had robbed them of their property, and grew cold in ſupporting his cauſe.

While Harold was at York enjoying the fruits of his victory: William ſailed from St. Valery, and landed at Pevenſay * in Suſſex the very next day.

Though there was no enemy in view, the debarkation was made with as much order and precaution, as if the coaſt had been lined with ſoldiers. The duke, having ſunk in the mud on his quitting his ſhip, fell on his hands, and in order to prevent this ac-

* There was nothing to oppoſe his deſcent. Harold indeed had fitted out a conſiderable fleet, computed at ſeven hundred ſail, which cruiſed off the iſle of Wight in order to oppoſe William's deſigns. But as the duke had delayed his enterprize ſo long by reaſon of contrary winds, the king was led to think that he had entirely declined it: this ſurmize was confirmed, according to ſome authors, even by earl Baldwin, who had been applied to for information. However, Harold's armament was diſperſed, and had quitted its ſtation for want of proviſions; and Harold himſelf had withdrawn all his forces from the ſea coaſts, from a firm perſuaſion, that the Norman invaſion was entirely laid aſide.

accident from being interpreted as a bad omen by the superstitious, cried out, as Cesar did on a similar occasion, "† Tis thus that I take possession of the country." This unexpected turn of the duke having its intended effect on his army, he marched immediately to Hastings, and, in order to deprive his men of all hopes of returning, or of safety, unless they conquered, ‡ ordered his fleet to be burnt. As the fortune of war was not in his disposal, and he might possibly be subjected to some unforeseen incident, he built a fort at the place where he landed, and, when he came to Hastings, built another there, in order to secure his retreat. After he had taken these precautions, he published a manifesto, containing the reasons which induced him to make his descent.

Besides other motives, he declared he had come to revenge the death of prince Alfred, who had been murdered by Harold's father; to restore Robert, who had been unjustly deprived of the see of Canterbury; and to take satisfaction of Harold for having seized the crown in violation of his oath.

The provisions he had on board his fleet being consumed during his lying wind-bound at

† This is the account of Wace's manuscript history: but, according to William of Malmesbury, it was one of the soldiers, who made use of this expression.

‡ From the manuscript history of Battel-abbey, in the Cottonian collection, at the British Museum, marked *Domitian.* A. 2.

at St. Valery, he gave ſtrict orders to his ſoldiers not to plunder the inhabitants, or deſtroy the country, for fear of being diſtreſſed by want; but concealed his true reaſons by telling them, "they ought to ſpare what would ſhortly be their own."

Harold having received advice of the duke's landing, marched with the remainder of his brave army towards London. His late victory over a powerful enemy might perhaps have rendered him too confident of ſucceſs, and precipitated him into this raſh meaſure. The diſcontent which his late ſeizure of the booty had occaſioned had a very bad effect on his affairs at this juncture, and the greateſt part of thoſe, who had been diſguſted, deſerted him in his way to London. In order to prevent a general revolt, Harold behaved to ſuch of his ſoldiers as remained with extraordinary civility and generoſity; and by ſending diſpatches to the nobility, repreſenting the dangers, to which they, their country, and he himſelf were expoſed, gained no inconſiderable recruits. § By that

§ During this interval, as we are informed by Wace's manuſcript hiſtory, one Robert a Norman baron ſettled in theſe parts, ſent the duke on account of Harold's victory over the king of Norway, and his return from the north towards London; adviſing him at the ſame time not to venture a battle with ſuch a numerous army of brave men, as the uſurper was bringing againſt him, but to entrench himſel, as ſtrongly as he could in his camp at Haſtings.

time he arrived at London, his army was grown very numerous, and seemed to want nothing but refreshment.

Whilst Harold was in these parts, he was joined by an ambassadour from duke William, who proposed his resigning the crown to his master, in such terms, as incensed him to such a degree, that he could scarcely restrain himself from doing him a violence. His late victory still operated so powerfully on his mind, that he replied to the duke's proposal, in terms no less insolent than the message, and threatened him very severely, if he did not evacuate his dominions immediately. The ambassadours, whom Harold sent with his menaces, were received with great politeness by the duke, and, notwithstanding the purport of their commission, dismissed with no less civility. While these things were in agitation, Harold made a general muster of his army, and finding his regiments wanting in their complements by the slaughter he had sustained in his late battle with the Norwegians, partly supplied the vacancies by several reinforcements from the nobility: and, though

Hastings. William, however, either too judicious, or too intrepid to follow such timorous advice, returned for answer, "that he was come into England to seek his enemy; that he put confidence in the valour of his troops, and did not doubt of his having his revenge on Harold, even though he had but ten thousand, instead of sixty thousand soldiers, or more, that he had brought with him into the kingdom."

though forces were raiſing for him in moſt parts of the kingdom, would not ſtay till they joined him. ‖ Notwithſtanding his confidence of victory, he ſuffered himſelf to be perſuaded by the lords of his council, before he hazarded a battle, to ſend a meſſage to the duke, with offers to defray the charge of his expedition, if he would immediately evacuate the kingdom. This meſſage was received by William with great contempt, and anſwered in the following terms: "that he (the duke) was not come over for his coin, but to take poſſeſſion of his kingdom, which he had uſurped in violation of his oath, and that nothing leſs than the whole would ſatisfy him." Harold received this reply, in a manner ſuitable to his character; highly incenſed at the contemptuous terms it was delivered in, and burning with eagerneſs to attack the duke, though he was not as yet joined by half his ſupplies. * Gyrth, a younger brother to the king, who was of a cooler head, and a perſon of no leſs wiſdom and bravery, endeavoured all he could to diſſuade him from his reſolution. He re-

 preſented

‖ This account, which is contrary to the ſtream of moſt hiſtorians, is taken from *Wace*'s manuſcript hiſtory.

* Wace ſeems with great probability to introduce this interpoſition of Gyrth in this place, though Malmeſbury and others repreſent it as the effect of the intelligence brought by the ſpies, which Harold ſent to reconnoitre the Norman army.

preſented this ſtep as too raſh, adviſed him rather to waſte the country and carry off all the proviſions it afforded; perſuaded him to entruſt his army to his care, that he might attack the Normans if they offered battle, or to reſtrain them from foraging in order to ſupply themſelves with proviſions; as he had not given his oath to William, he urged the expediency of this method from that topic, and concluded, that it was both politic and neceſſary for Harold to remain at London, in order to take proper meaſures to ſuſtain him in caſe the duke ſhould be too ſtrong for him; but to ſtake his kingdom upon one battle would be not only extreme madneſs, but extreme folly likewiſe." Though all the Engliſh nobility approved of Gyrth's advice, though his mother joined her entreaties to ſtrengthen the arguments of her ſon, Harold rejected his brother's perſuaſions with indignation, contemned the approbation of the nobility, and turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his mother. Reſolved either to drive the Normans into the ſea, or to die in the attempt, he marched directly into Suſſex, entertaining a contemptible idea of the duke's ſtrength, on account of his entrenching himſelf ſo ſtrongly, and remaining inactive, ſo long after his landing.

† When he came within ſeven miles from the

† From Wace's manuſcript.

the enemy, he took all the precautions of ſituation that were neceſſary to prevent a ſurprize: with this view he encamped on a hill, which he encloſed on all ſides with a large trench, leaving only three avenues open, and ordered his men to lye on their arms all night.

The next morning he mounted his horſe, and went in company with Gyrth towards the enemy's camp, advancing to a convenient eminence near enough to diſcover the exactneſs of their diſcipline, the glittering of their armour, and the great number of their cavalry.

Harold, finding from this view, that he had deceived himſelf with reſpect to the ſtrength of the enemy, propoſed, on his return to his camp, to retreat to London, in order to augment his forces: but was told, with ſome warmth, by Gyrth, that he ought not to have quitted that place contrary to the advice of his nobility, before his troops had been aſſembled; that it was too late to repent of his raſhneſs, and as he had advanced ſo far, his honour was engaged and he muſt either conquer or be ruined; that to retire one ſtep without fighting, would look like cowardice, would be interpreted as a flight, and attended with an entire loſs of his reputation; in fine, to attempt a retreat, in the ſight of the Normans, would animate them, while it diſcouraged his own troops,

occaſion a general revolt, and endanger the loſs of his whole army.

Harold convinced by theſe reaſons, kept firm to his firſt reſolution of attacking the Normans, or ſtanding his ground: but being deſirous of knowing the exact number and diſpoſition of the enemy, ſent two ſpies into the Norman camp to get intelligence. The ſpies, however being diſcovered, were ſeized and brought before William: who underſtanding their employment ordered them to be carried all over his camp, that they might make what diſcoveries they pleaſed; and, having entertained them very generouſly, diſmiſſed them.

Upon their return to Harold, they ſpoke highly in commendation of the duke's generoſity; but ſeemed to deſpiſe his ſoldiers, whom they repreſented as a crowd of prieſts: a miſtake they were led into becauſe the Normans ſhaved their upper lips, whereas all the Engliſh except their prieſts, let their whiſkers grow. Harold laughed at their ſimplicity, and convinced them of their error, by aſſuring the ſpies, that it was the cuſtom of the Normans to ſhave their upper lips, and that from his own experience he knew them to be a very brave people.

William, after the return of the ſpies, was willing to give Harold another inſtance of his magnanimity, and, in order to prevent an effuſion of blood, ſent Hugh Margot, a monk

of

of Feſcam, to offer the king his choice, of the following alternatives: i. e. either to reſign the crown quietly; to hold it in vaſſalage from him; to decide their rights to it by ſingle combat; or to refer the determination of their mutual claim to the pope. Harold, rejecting all theſe propoſals, ſent away the monk in a hurry, bidding him tell the duke, that he would ſubmit the deciſion of his cauſe to GOD alone. This anſwer being repeated in the hearing of the Norman army, the barons grew impatient to come to action, and adviſed the duke to lead them to the charge before the king was joined by the † Londoners. William, notwithſtanding their ardour, was reſolved to try another expedient, in order to give a greater ſanction to his cauſe, and varniſh over his ambition with the colour of reluctance and neceſſity. For this purpoſe, being attended with twenty men, he advanced in perſon, intending to offer Harold all the provinces of England, north of the Humber, and to ſecure all Godwin's patrimony to Gyrth, providing they would conſent to cede the reſt of the kingdom to him; but in caſe of a refuſal to pronounce Harold a perjured liar, to declare all his adherents excommunicated by the pope, and to challenge them to a general engagement. Harold, ſeeing the duke advance towards him with an intention to hold a con-

† From T. Wikes's chronicle.

a conference with him, ſent his brother Gyrth to him to receive his propoſals. On Gyrth's return, the duke's offers were reported in a council conſiſting of Engliſh nobles, who were extremely terrified with the menace of excommunication, and, in order to ſave themſelves from ſo dreadful a curſe, adviſed Harold to come to an accommodation. Gyrth, alarmed at the panic, which ran through the whole army like a contagion, thought it was high time to ſtop it from ſpreading any further, and, with an eloquence peculiar to himſelf, diſplayed to them the inevitable loſs of their lands and honours as the conſequence of their puſillanimity, aſſuring them that William had already granted them to his followers. Harold, ſupporting his brother's arguments with promiſes of larger eſtates as a reward for their fidelity and valour, the duke's propoſals were rejected with the greateſt unanimity, and the enſuing day was appointed for a general engagement.

The manner in which the two armies paſſed the night was very different; the Engliſh ſpent it in jollity, drinking, revelling, and feaſting, to excite their courage; but the Normans, in prayers, confeſſion, and receiving the euchariſt.

Harold, who was far inferiour to the enemy in numbers, was willing to compenſate for

* October 14, A. D. 1066.

for this inconvenience, by taking the advantage of the ground; and drew up his men in a column on the declivity of a hill, with a large ditch and a line of hurdles before them. His vanguard was composed of Kentishmen, ‖ according to a custom which had prevailed ever since the Saxon heptarchy, and the main body, † consisting of Londoners, was commanded by the king and his brothers on foot.

The Normans were formed in three lines, the first of which was composed of the troops of Bretagne, Anjou, le Maine, and Perche, and commanded by Allan Forgant, the count of Breteuil, and Roger de Montgomery: the second of Poictovins and Germans, under the command of * Charles Martel, and a German prince; the reserve, or rear, consisting of the bravest troops of Normandy, were commanded by § William in person. A strong body of cavalry, armed cap-a-pee, were distributed in the wings, which were likewise lined with archers.

‡ The

‖ They were armed with halberts, pikes and targets.

† They likewise had the privilege of guarding the king's person. Harold particularly cautioned them to keep close together, telling them that breaking their ranks would be attended with inevitable ruin.

* Camden names him Geffrey Martel.

§ From the manuscript of Wace, Huntingdon, and Diceto. Our ancient historians inform us, that as the duke was dressing for the battle, his esquire, by mistake, put

The Norman's, marching with the pope's banner at their head, began the attack on three ſides at once. Tallifer, a veteran ſoldier, advanced before the reſt, and ſung, according to their cuſtom, the famous ſong of Roland and the heroes that fell at Roncevaux, to rouſe the valour of his countrymen. Having the duke's leave, he began the attack, by running one of the Engliſh enſigns through with his lance, and killing another with his ſword; but, endeavouring to diſpatch a third, he was killed himſelf. After this the Norman archers diſcharged a volley of arrows, which terrified the Engliſh, who were not uſed to that kind of weapons. Seeing their men fall on all ſides, they thought the enemy had penetrated into the center of their army, and were not a little diſcompoſed in their imaginations. The Normans thinking this a proper time to purſue their advantage, charged them with great impetuoſity; but the Engliſh having cloſed their files, gave them a warm reception, and obliged them to retire. After a ſmall reſpite, the enemy returned again to the charge with redoubled fury, and

put on his armour with the wrong ſide outwards; which the duke taking notice of, was willing to comply with the humour of the times, by looking on it as an omen, and, in order to animate his men, ſaid, "that it was a ſign that he ſhould change the ſtrength of his dukedom into that of a kingdom."

and were received by the Engliſh with equal firmneſs. The two armies were engaged for ſome time hand to hand, but the Engliſh ſtill remained impenetrable; the Bretons on the left wing of the Norman army ſuffered very much by the enemies javelins, and, giving way, were puſhed into ſome covered ditches. The other corps, being ſeized with a ſudden pannic, on a report that the duke was ſlain, were upon the point of flying, had he not marched in haſte from the right to their aſſiſtance, and led them on again to the charge. The Engliſh, elate with their little advantage, had, contrary to Harold's order, quitted the hill, where they had the advantage of ground, in order to purſue the Bretons into the plain; as they had no cavalry themſelves, and were not armed to withſtand their attacks, William brought up a body of his horſe from one of his wings, by which he cut off the retreat of two or three thouſand, conſiſting of Kentiſh and Eſſex men, and put them all to the ſword. * He then marched with a body of one thouſand horſe againſt the Engliſh that kept their poſts, in order to break their ranks, but was received with the ſame intrepidity as before. Thus repulſed on all ſides, and in deſpair of prevailing by

* From a manuſcript, in the archbiſhop of Canterbury's library at Lambeth, marked *Brutus*.

by open force, he resolved to have recourse to stratagem. For this purpose, he caused his men to retreat on a sudden and feign a flight: which the English taking for a real one, pursued them again into the plain, without any order or caution. As soon as the Normans thought their confusion great enough to secure their advantage, they faced about, and, surrounding them with their cavalry, killed vast numbers of them. The remainder of the English army recovered the hill, where they still maintained their ground, and formed a kind of Phalanx impenetrable to the whole force of the enemy. The Normans however finding their attacks in vain, while the English remained in this situation, had recourse a second time to their former stratagem, and the enemy, forgetting the loss they had sustained by their excess of valour, quitted their posts again to pursue the Normans into the plain, who rallied their forces as before, and killed great numbers of them in their confusion.

End of the THIRD VOLUME.